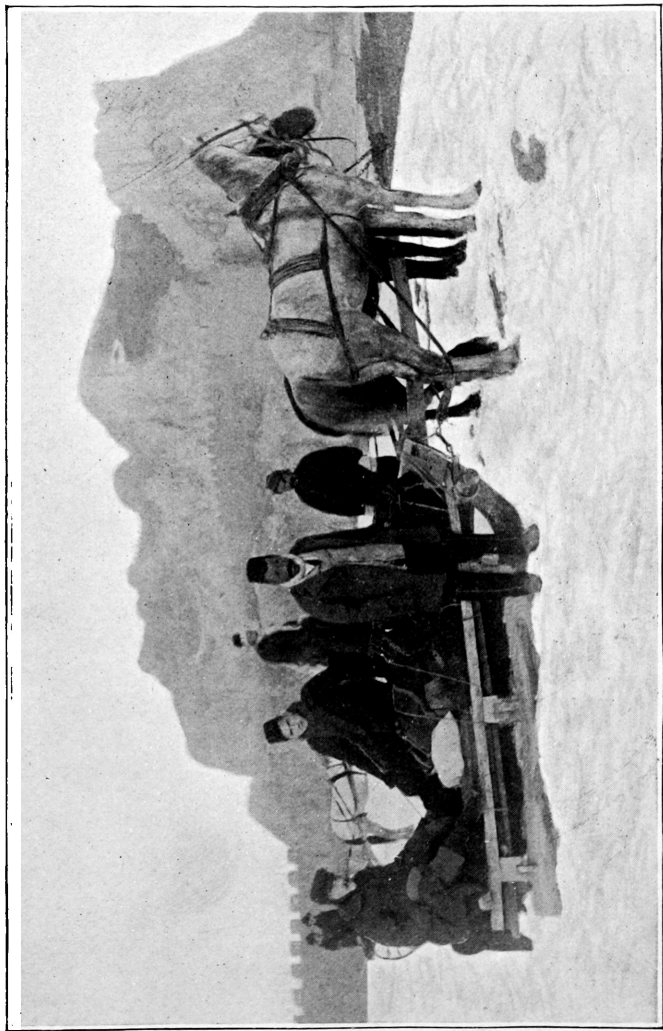


McGhee
1001

IN THE SHADOW OF THE
CRESCENT



OUR SLEDGE LEAVING VAN.

Drs. Raynolds and Ussher are in the cart : the man with the white band round his fez is the zabtieh : in the background is Van rock, from the top of which the Armenians were hurled.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE CRESCENT

BY
J. ALSTON CAMPBELL, F.R.G.S.

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INTRODUCTORY LETTER

FROM DR. J. RENDEL HARRIS.

My dear Mr. Campbell,

When I came upon you in the Mission House at Aintab, having been on your track at several points in Asiatic Turkey, you were just beginning to return into the sunshine from the Valley of the Shadow; the exposure to cold, the arduous labours in which you had been engaged, and the fever which always seems to be lurking in wait for the traveller, had so reduced you that it was doubtful if, after we left you, we should ever see you again. But amongst all the mercies and goodnesses which pursued your path (as they did ours) you were able to include a recovery to health and a return to your native land, and now you are writing a memorial of the good hand of God which was upon you, and trying once more to arouse the interest of English Christians in what seems to us to be the never-ending woes of the Christians under Turkish rule. Probably there are not many English people who have seen so much of the inside of the Armenian trouble as Millard and yourself, and in a lesser degree my wife and myself. Those who travel in great state, and under numerous escorts, see little or nothing of what is going on; they never escape from Turkish surveillance, and

they never get near to Armenian confidence. ♣ Then they come home and write books, which glorify the persecutor and heap contempt on his victims. Millard, whose work you followed up, did a noble service to our poor brethren during his visit, and might have done much more if he had not been wanted and crowned elsewhere. Your brief story will, perhaps, do something like what he would have accomplished if he had lived longer and told us more of what he had been doing. I am glad you are printing it, though I have not been able to help you with the preparation of the book for the press or with its critical revision. The Lord will use it in some way for the good of His poor people I feel sure. There are times when I resent the doctrine about the slow grinding of the mills of God ; because it seems as if God had no right to move so slowly : at other times the evangelic message re-asserts itself in my mind, and the words become illuminated on the page which tell us of ‘ His own elect, which cry unto Him day and night,’ and that ‘ He will avenge them speedily.’

J. RENDEL HARRIS.

Sept. 28, 1906.

P R E F A C E

ALTHOUGH not a few books have already been written on Asiatic Turkey, I am strongly of opinion, for the following reasons, that there is room for this additional one.

Hitherto the majority of those who have described this wonderful country and its peoples, have been either persons of title, scientists, scholars, or wealthy tourists, and these have not only written from their own standpoint, but by virtue of their position have received great attention from, and been more or less personally conducted by, the Turkish officials, who have endeavoured to keep from their view anything which it was not expedient for them to see. In my own case, however, the circumstances were different. I traversed the country as a plain ordinary man, and was usually regarded by the Turks as being an unimportant person who was not worthy of much notice, a fact which enabled me to mix more freely with the Christian races, to visit villages and districts away from the beaten track, and to see things as they really are.

The information and incidents given are not merely the impressions of a passing visitor, but may be taken as well-founded, for I have taken pains to confirm and verify as far as it is possible to do so, all that is recorded. In many instances of wrong-doing I have not, for obvious

reasons, mentioned places or names, and at other times, when the story has been too horrible to relate in all its dramatic infamy, I have been compelled to draw a veil over certain things.

Having no interest whatever in Asiatic Turkey of a commercial character, my chief object in writing this book has been to awaken the sympathies of the Christian nations of the West on behalf of a helpless and suffering people, and in addition to recount my personal experiences of the faithfulness of God. Whilst it has been absolutely necessary to draw attention to what I believe to be the culpable negligence of the Powers in not insisting upon the carrying out of such reforms as have been covenanted for by Treaty, it is only charitable and fair to believe that much of the seeming apathy amongst those who should take an active part in alleviating the sufferings of the Armenians is due to the scarcity of information concerning their condition, and this book is sent forth with the hope that it may, in some measure, supply this lack. If in the hands of God it should be the means of inciting prayer for the suffering Christians of Turkey, or in any way help to the promotion of much needed reforms I will not have written it in vain.

My thanks are due to one who for many years resided in Turkey, for the revision of much that I have stated; to H. F. B. Lynch, Esq., M.P., for reading and criticising the last chapter; as well as to Dr. J. Rendel Harris for his kindness in writing an introductory letter. I wish also to gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to other friends, for valuable literary advice and suggestions.

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CHAPTER I

HOW I CAME TO GO

IT is not my intention to recount here the many experiences through which I passed prior to my departure for Asiatic Turkey, which, though they form no part of the present story, had undoubtedly much to do with my preparation for the work that I did whilst there. In obedience to what I believed to be the command of God, I went to that land for the purpose of conducting special services on the mission stations and in the churches established by the missionaries, and before describing the many strange and exciting experiences which befel me as a lonely wanderer through the domains of the Sultan, I will explain as best I can those particular events which led me to the conclusion that it was right, and my bounden duty to set out upon this journey.

At the beginning of the year 1902, having spent a number of years in evangelistic work and in preparation for missionary labour abroad, I felt that the time had come when God wished me to go forth into that wider sphere of service which is offered by the "regions beyond." At this time I had no thought of Asiatic Turkey as a sphere of service, my interest being more largely centred on lands that were farther afield. I knew that a friend of mine, Mr. E. C. Millard, who, like myself, was engaged in evangelistic work, had visited it shortly after the terrible carnage of 1894-1896, and that he had conducted

special services whilst there, but although I had heard him refer to his visit, I knew little about the conditions of life in that land, and nothing as to the exact nature or localities of his labours; and his death shortly after his return precluded my hearing anything further from him regarding it.

Desirous of having clear direction from God as to where He wished me to go, I spent several days in waiting upon Him for a revelation of His will, and one afternoon, whilst praying for this, He, by His Holy Spirit, told me to go to Armenia, as there was a work for me to do there which Mr. Millard would have done had he lived. "All that a soldier needs to know is that he has understood his orders," therefore, wishing to make sure that it was really God's voice that had been speaking to me, I asked Him to confirm the instruction given by sending me two things, in the first place, a travelling companion for the journey, and secondly, sufficient money to enable me to make a start.

God had before this given me many realisations of the fact that He never gives a command without also supplying His servants with the means wherewith to obey it, consequently I was ready to go forth in simple faith trusting Him for the supply of all temporal needs, and knowing that, as His kingdom was sought first, all other things would be added. He kept me from mentioning to others the way in which He was leading me, thus I was perfectly sure when the answer was received that it came direct from Himself and not as the result of any human intervention.

The first sign of an answer was given a few days later when I received a registered letter containing a bank note for five pounds, and though I do not to this day know who the sender was, I have no hesitation in saying that this kind gift was prompted by the Holy Spirit.

A few days after the receipt of this, the answer was

given to the other petition I had offered. I was present at an evening service, at which it was announced that an Armenian who was about to return to his native land was present, and that a farewell meeting, in order to bid him "God-speed" and to pray for work he was hoping to engage in, would be held on the following evening. As I was leaving I met a friend whom I had not seen for a number of years. He informed me that he was greatly interested in the Armenian—who, I learnt, was living in his home—and asked me to come to tea the following evening and afterwards speak at the farewell meeting. This I promised to do.

At the tea-table next day, in addition to seeing a number of friends, I was introduced to a gentleman who had hoped to accompany the Armenian for a few months, in order to be some protection to him on the journey and also to report on the needs of the district of Salmas to which he was proceeding. This friend expressed his regret at being prevented from going, and a general desire was manifested that someone else might be found to take his place.

I felt that this was the companion I had been praying for, and recognising in this the gracious hand of God, was full of thankfulness to Him, but, thinking it best to wait and see what turn the meeting took, did not mention to those present the way in which I myself had been exercised in mind regarding Armenia. Strange to say, although I had been invited to speak at the service, no opportunity was afforded of doing this. It was of a very informal nature, and throughout its course prayers were repeatedly offered asking that a companion might be found for the one who was leaving them, one man saying in his prayer, "Oh Lord perhaps you want Mr. Campbell to go."

When the service closed I told some of those who had been taking part of the way in which I had been guided and of my readiness to accompany the Armenian. The

response I received from them was very cordial. They told me, however, that, whilst they would rejoice to take a prayerful interest in my work, they had already contributed towards the expenses of the one who was leaving them, and could not in any degree make themselves responsible for my support. In reply I explained that I did not ask for money, for I knew that as God had told me to go He would supply my needs in answer to prayer. I was then informed that I had only two days in which to make preparations for the journey and obtain a passport, as the boat by which a first-class passage had been booked for my companion was due to leave Marseilles almost immediately.

I communicated with the agents of this steamer on the following day, but was told that neither a second nor a third-class passage was obtainable, and that if I wished to book a berth I must take a first-class ticket. Not having the wherewithal to do this, yet sure that I was in the will of God in going forward, I resolved to travel to Marseilles in faith, trusting God, if He was not pleased to supply this need before I left England, to do so on my arrival at the boat.

Kind friends advised me to go and call on those who would be likely to assist financially, but it seemed better to go to God about this and tell Him the need, then, when money came I could be certain that it had been given by the direction of the Holy Ghost. Under a good deal of pressure I did, however, go to say good-bye to a few friends, most of whom were sympathetic, one or two only being inclined to throw cold water on my proposed work. Many missionaries would, I am sure, be glad if those who shower cold water on them ere they leave would send them "a cup of cold water" after their arrival in the scorching heat of heathendom.

On the morning of the day on which I was obliged to start I found that I had received about seventeen pounds,

a sum not sufficient of itself, but with God and His promises more than enough. I was glad to have such a splendid opportunity of trusting Him and of proving the absolute infallibility of His word. Our Lord sent His disciples forth without scrip or purse and they lacked nothing, and I knew that if God did not send me enough to pay my fare to Tabriz before I started, He would supply me with the balance after I had gone half way. It may not of course be considered orthodox to go forth in this way, it is not always considered orthodox to trust in God at all, but it is a very wonderful and happy experience to find one's need being supplied by the living God in answer to believing prayer, and in this way to have a practical evidence that one's life is in harmony with His will, and that the work which is being done meets with His approval. The Lord had for some years supplied my needs in answer to prayer without my asking for money or making those wants known to men, and although I started out without the slightest guarantee of support from any organisation, body of Christians, or individuals, I was, throughout the whole of what was an expensive journey, able to praise God for supplying each need as it arose. It is an incalculable blessing and an intense stimulus to faith, having thus experimentally proved the truth of God's word to be able to look back and say as Joshua said, "Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord spake." God was giving me an opportunity of testing His promises, and had I failed to obey I would have lost one of the valuable experiences of life.

The luggage which I took hardly amounted to the pile that is sometimes taken. I have heard of travellers in Turkey whose baggage was of such proportions that it required thirty or forty horses to transport it from one place to another. It is certainly much more comfortable to travel in this manner, as, instead of being obliged, as

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I sometimes was, to sleep in stables or out in the open fields, one can, with plenty of baggage animals, carry several tents, and thus ensure a good rest every night. I pruned down my outfit until I was able to carry everything myself and thus be independent of porters in the strange lands I was about to traverse, and with a collapsible hold-all in one hand and a leather valise in the other, was finally ready to start. The fact that I carried so little luggage may, I think, be partly responsible for the many escapes I afterwards had from Koords and brigands, who apparently thought I was not worth robbing.

Then, through the goodness of God, one or two further gifts were sent to me, and a friend who came to bid me farewell at the station said something which was a great help many times afterwards when in difficulty or danger. We had been conversing about passports, and I told him of possible trouble with regard to these, to which he replied by saying that as I was going out in God's service He would be my passport to all the places He might wish me to visit. Often did I have cause to thank God for these words. When in trouble with officials in Persia or Turkey they came back to me and enabled me to rely more fully on the power of God to make a way out of the difficulty.

There being no other travellers in the compartment in which I journeyed to Newhaven, I took advantage of the good opportunity afforded to kneel down and pray for God's blessing to rest on the work I was undertaking. Next morning, whilst being whirled towards Paris, to which city the Armenian had preceded me, I entered into conversation with a fellow passenger, on his way back from England to his home in France. He appeared to have given up all profession of religion, but listened with interest whilst I explained to Him the way of God's salvation.

Whilst travelling from Paris to Marseilles, the Armenian, about whom I knew nothing, and whom I will call Jacob, joined with me in prayer that a passage might be found for me on board the steamer. On arriving at our destination we made inquiry of the agents who, to my joy, informed me that they had a berth they could give me at third-class fare. This I at once engaged, and afterwards found it to be most comfortable. We praised God for this signal answer to prayer, a proof to us of the truth that "when He putteth forth His own sheep He goeth before them."

My departure from London had of necessity been so hurried as to leave no time to ascertain in what part of Armenia Mr. Millard had worked. God had answered my prayer almost sooner than I expected, and the companion prayed for having been sent, I had gone forth trusting for further guidance to be given as required. I therefore took an opportunity, before leaving Marseilles, of writing a letter asking for information regarding my predecessor's sphere of labour. Although the information did not come through the channel by which I sought to obtain it, God, as will be seen later on, so arranged things that I was not left without the guidance desired. Having said so much to explain how it was I came to go to Asiatic Turkey, and the purpose for which I went, I will now proceed to describe the strange experiences and adventures which befel me in that land.

CHAPTER II

IN STRANGE COMPANY

THE sun was shining brilliantly on a sea of azure blue, the sky above gave promise of fair weather, and as we went on board the steamer which was to convey us from Marseilles to Batoum, it was with pleasant anticipations of a good voyage, which were fully realised. After the usual hurrying to and fro, the anchor was weighed ; Marseilles rapidly diminished in size until it became a speck on the horizon, and our vessel headed for the passage between the Islands of Corsica and Sardinia. We were charmed again next morning with glorious sunshine, which, falling on the white deck of our steamer, on the calm sea around, and lighting up with a wondrous warmth of colour the mountains of Sardinia, made all our world seem beautiful. This island had scarcely been lost to sight when the rugged and picturesque Italian coast began to be discernible. It was evening when we passed through the Straits of Messina. As we cut our way through the calm placid waters which reflected myriads of lights, a holy stillness seemed to have fallen upon all around, and we felt like trespassers in a sacred scene, the noise of our engines sounding strangely out of place amidst such tranquillity, a note of discord in a harmony of rest.

The majority of the passengers were of French nationality, quite a number being merchants on their way to make purchases of silks and other goods in Persia. My

cabin was shared by a French soldier who was on his way to Constantinople. Finding that he was anxious to learn English I asked if he would allow me to teach him some, an offer which he gladly accepted. Obtaining a French Testament I translated a number of verses, and in this way he was able to gain some of the knowledge desired. This opened the way for several talks with him about his eternal welfare, a subject regarding which he appeared at first to be indifferent. As time went on, however, I was able, by constant repetition of the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of St. John's Gospel, and other passages of Scripture, to teach him some of the truths of the Bible; he then became more interested, and I trust that, ere I left him, had profited spiritually by this instruction.

Our first port of call was Patras in Greece, from there we went to Syra, a beautiful town of white buildings situated on a little islet in the Grecian Archipelago. At Salonica, which was the next port of call, we made our first acquaintance with the Turks, who subjected our ship to a rigorous examination, and placed a spy on board to watch the vessel and its passengers so long as it remained in Turkish waters. This town, in which I was allowed to land, appeared to contain a strange medley of races, and a few days after our departure a terrible earthquake occurred, when a great many houses collapsed, and the citizens were driven to live outside the town for safety.

At the Dardanelles, where we stopped for a few hours, we met the full flow of Oriental life. The great majority of Turks and Persians usually travel as deck passengers, eating, living, and sleeping on deck, and our ship was hardly large enough to accommodate the numbers of them who flocked on board at this place. Many were pilgrims returning from Mecca, some were street hawkers, others merchants, but all appeared to be happy and contented as they spread their mats and quilts on deck, and squatting upon

them partook of their morning meal with evident satisfaction. For many of them this repast consisted only of native bread and cheese, with occasionally an egg or some spring onions. A large green cupboard was hoisted on board at this place, and I found that it was the kitchen of the caterer for these people, a man who appeared to do a roaring trade all day long by retailing cups of tea and coffee. In order to provide for the better seclusion of the Mohammedan women a sailcloth tent was rigged up for them on the hatchway, and in this they slept at night.

As we steamed towards Constantinople we became greatly interested in watching the habits of these deck passengers. A few amongst them spent their time in reading, others in conversation and gossip, whilst the Turks occasionally relieved the situation by an impromptu dance. For this the men clasped hands and formed a ring, then danced or rather jumped round the musicians, at each step bending low, then suddenly rising, raising the arms and jumping into the air.

Every visitor to Constantinople will agree that, viewed from the deck of a steamer, it is a most attractive city. The old world quaintness of the buildings, the many minarets which stand like sentinels among them, the grand majestic mosques which crest the hills, the beautiful palaces which are dotted along the shores of the Bosphorus, the cypresses and plane trees, which, sprinkled liberally about, give a touch of freshness everywhere, the gaily attired boatmen in their brightly coloured caiques, gliding gracefully through the still blue waters, the gleaming sails which dart to and fro in the sunlight like birds in search of prey, the clear and cloudless sky—all conspire to enchant and make the beholder fancy that he has been suddenly transported into the fairy-land of some story-book, or the imaginary paradise of an Eastern fable.

On nearing the quay, however, illusion gives place to

reality, and much of the enchantment disappears. Carts can be heard rattling over badly paved streets which are sometimes so narrow that vehicles are unable to pass one another; irregularly built wooden shops are interspersed with ramshackle houses, whose balconies overhang to a perilous degree, whilst beneath all the hubbub and noise of busy commerce which rises from the shore one seems to hear the long, heart-broken sob of those downtrodden Christian races who for centuries have been persecuted and oppressed by the power which sits enthroned in this city.

The waters of the Golden Horn, once stained with the blood of terrified fugitive Armenians, present an appearance of liveliest activity, commerce being brought here from almost every part of the world, and a large export trade being done in wool, mohair, hides, &c. Constantinople is the great port where goods for foreign markets are collected and shipped, and from which merchandise is sent into the interior.

The bright weather which greeted us on our arrival in the City of the Sultan was in strange contradiction to the gloomy atmosphere of suspicion in which we found ourselves as soon as we had made fast to the quay, and thus come under Turkish jurisdiction. We were in the shadow of the Crescent, and the blighting gloom of this knowledge seemed to depress the spirits of all on board. As we sought to land here for a few hours there came upon us some of that feeling of hopeless fear which a criminal must experience on being put into jail for the first time. A row of detectives was standing on the wharf awaiting the arrival of our ship, and as each passenger landed one of these men was told off to attend specially to him, and if necessary watch his movements during his sojourn in the Sublime City. I was waited upon by one of these as soon as I had landed, who, after examining my passport, took me to an office, at which I was informed that

because I had no Turkish *visa* on the same I would not be allowed to enter the town. I explained that I merely wished to call at one house and would then return.

"You must wait for an hour until the chief official comes and then we will ask him whether you may go," was the reply.

This dignitary put in an appearance at about nine a.m., and his remarks to the friend who interviewed him on my behalf were to the following effect:—"Why did you let this piece of dirt leave the boat, don't you know that he is not allowed to land being English?"

I was therefore escorted back to the ship, where I discovered that numbers of the French passengers who, like myself, had no Turkish *visa*, had been permitted to enter the town, but at that time there were political questions pending between France and Turkey, which made it advisable for the latter to keep on friendly terms with France, hence the different reception accorded to her subjects. I reported the treatment I had received to the British Ambassador, who afterwards informed me that the official responsible for it had been transferred to Kavak as a punishment. Such changes of office are said, however, to be very often promotions rather than punishments.

Many visitors to Constantinople have extolled the Turkish officials for their urbanity and politeness. This incident serves, I think, to show that beneath the veneer of apparent civility there often exists a deeply rooted aversion to, and prejudice against, the foreigner. It seems to be a rule amongst a certain class of officials to regard every British subject as a revolutionist and a criminal, until by some overt act of friendliness to the Moslems or of hostility to the Christians he has proved that he is not.

Only those who have experienced it can understand what sort of feelings a free-born Britisher has when for

the first time he begins to live under the dark cloud of tyranny and suspicion which such a spirit engenders. You are watched, questioned, and your actions misunderstood until life becomes a burden, yet if you rebel against this treatment you merely give to these officials an excuse for getting you into further trouble. That this unreasonable amount of suspicion sometimes has rather ludicrous results the following incidents will show.

It is a custom for all books entering the country to be examined in order to make sure that they do not contain any revolutionary articles. A story is told of a book on chemistry being rejected because it contained the chemical sign for water, " H_2O ." The officials interpreted this as a direct insult to the throne, the letter H they said stood for Hamid, the figure "2" meant that Hamid the second was referred to, and the "O" after it represented him as being nothing.

Another book of a theological character was rejected because it contained references to Scriptures which speak of putting off the old man and putting on the new man. This they believed had direct reference to their monarch.

In the Galata district of the city at another time a colporteur was found having in his possession a portion of the Scriptures, namely, the Epistle to the Galatians. whereupon the authorities seized the book with the thought that it was a seditious document especially addressed to the denizens of Galata, and they imprisoned the colporteur. The matter was explained to the official, who denounced the book as one calculated to make the people dissatisfied with their lot. In order to make sure that it was not a document of recent incendiary origin, the officer called for the death certificate of St. Paul, the author.

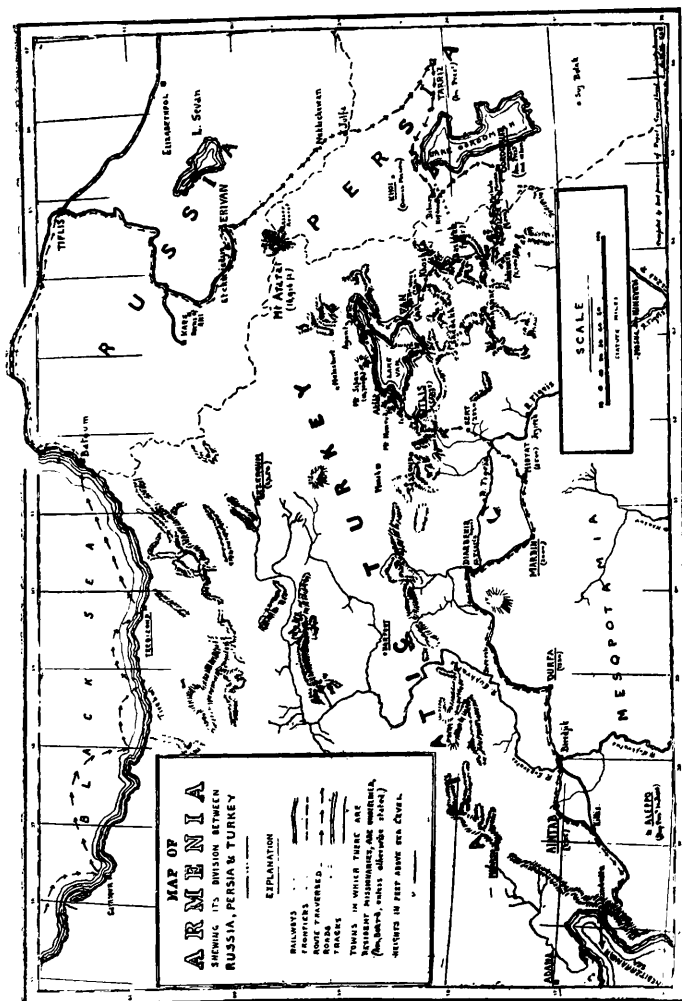
My imprisonment on board the steamer gave me a good opportunity of observing the various nationalities which are to be seen represented in this cosmopolitan city. Men in every variety of costume were passing to and fro

on the quay. There was the Turk with his baggy trousers, the Armenian in flowing *zoboos*, the Koord wearing his mysterious headgear, the dark-visaged Greek, the Jew in his fur robes, whilst occasionally additional colour was lent to the scene by the passing of Circassians, Bulgarians, Arabs, or Persians.

During the afternoon a large crowd assembled on the wharf, and we were informed that it had gathered to bid farewell to a high Turkish official known as a Vali, who intended leaving by our steamer to take up a new position, as governor of a vilayet, to which he had been appointed. Preceded by ten or eleven of his wives, he came on board in great state, accompanied by a retinue of very servile followers, some of whom were observed to kiss his coat tails ere they said "good-bye." He was a small, thin man, with a grey beard, and with his advent a portion of the Turkish cloud of suspicion and tyranny seemed to have settled on board the steamer. I first realised this when I was rudely hauled away by an officious young Turk from what was considered to be a too close proximity to some of the Vali's wives who were standing on deck.

In spite of the fact that Turkey was at that time desirous of the friendship of France, the Turkish authorities, before allowing the Vali to come on board, had obliged the captain to haul down the French flag and run up the Turkish in its place, so that for the next few days we had to sail under false colours. It would on this account have been useless to resist the petty annoyances to which the passengers were subjected by the presence of this man, though two American ladies, who were on board, did give a refusal when requested to vacate their deck chairs in order that the Vali might make use of them.

We learnt that this official had been responsible for the death of some hundreds of Christians during the time of the great massacres, and evidences of his strong antipathy



to the "giaours" were not wanting in his conversation with those around him. Poor man, one could not help pitying him and yearning for him to know the Saviour whose followers he so zealously sought to exterminate. Can we estimate the great things this zealot might have done for the Kingdom of God had his life been from childhood turned into another channel? What has the Church of Christ been doing through the centuries that these men have never yet heard?

This man, after disembarking from our ship, proceeded to an inland town in Turkey to assume his duties, and had not been there many months before he deliberately arranged for a massacre to take place of all the Christians in the town, and I was able, later on, to obtain reliable information regarding all that happened.

He held secret meetings with the local Koordish chiefs, and arranged that, in return for a large bribe, he would allow them to enter the town on a certain day and plunder and massacre the Christians. It might endanger the safety of one now in Turkey were I to tell of the remarkable way in which a certain man obtained news of all that transpired at these meetings. Suffice it to say that when the negotiations were almost complete, and everything ready for the massacre to take place, information was conveyed to the British Consul in the town, and happily, through his endeavours, the plans of this Vali were frustrated, and the impending slaughter averted.

Fortunately we had more agreeable thoughts to occupy our minds whilst this official was on board our steamer. As we threaded our way through the Bosphorus we were enchanted with the beauty of its palace-girdled shores. For most of the twelve miles of its length it is less than one mile in width, and on either side rise lofty hills, covered with trees and shrubs, from which peep out at intervals ancient castles and exquisite mansions and summer residences.

From the ports on the Black Sea a considerable trade is done, and at several of them we spent some hours in loading or unloading cargo. At one place a hundred cases of eggs were put on board, consigned to England. We enquired as to whether they were specially packed but were told they were not, and were assured on good authority that when they arrived at their destination, in a month's time, they would be "saleable."

It was almost sunset, on the thirteenth day after leaving Marseilles, when we cast anchor off the little Russian town of Batoum, in which many Armenians live, and awaited the arrival of the small boat which brought the Custom's officers. After passports and goods had been examined we were allowed to land, and at once proceeded to an hotel, intending to go inland on the morrow.

It will be remembered that I had set out on my journey somewhat uncertain as to whether I had sufficient money with me to pay the fare to Tabriz, but trusting God to supply more on the way if necessary. I found that God, who is always true to His promises, had honored my faith, and a letter was waiting for me when I arrived in this city containing a cheque which enabled me to proceed. This was to me an evidence of the loving care of Jehovah God, a proof, if such were required, that there is, for every child of His, a life of abandonment to His guidance, and surrender to His will, in which all one's needs, as they arise, are automatically met in answer to a life of obedience, faith, and prayer.

We had been troubled somewhat, both on board the steamer and in the hotel, by the too close attentions of an Armenian, whom we strongly suspected of being a spy in the employ of the Government, and from whose company it seemed impossible to escape. Managing eventually to evade him, we decided to stay at the coast for another day, and were surprised the following afternoon to receive a call from another Armenian who

was not known to either of us. He was a short, thick-set man of powerful build, with dark features, long black hair, shaggy eyebrows, fierce moustachios, and a black beard.

Walking into the room he introduced himself, and after eyeing us from head to foot, informed us in fairly good English that he was a traveller on his way to Tabriz, the city to which he had heard we were bound. He explained that as we would all be going over the same road at the same time, he would like to join company with us, and also stated that, as one carriage could accommodate four persons, this arrangement would prove a mutual economy in the hiring of carriages necessary for the four or five days' drive from the railway terminus to Tabriz.

After consultation we decided that even if the man were a spy we could not prevent him accompanying us, and as we had no evidence that he was, it would be best to give him the benefit of the doubt, and allow him to join us. If I had then had the experience of Oriental travel which I now possess, I would have hesitated a great deal more than I did, before coming to such a decision.

As night fell we made our way to the railway station and commenced our journey to Tiflis. The trains were very comfortable, with corridors running through them, and with most of the carriages so constructed that an additional bed could be arranged for, over each of the seats. Although our compartment was well filled with passengers, we passed a by no means unpleasant night, arriving in Tiflis early the following morning.

This town, which is prettily situated on a river, possesses a park, and has some magnificent buildings. Its streets are well laid out, and it is as far advanced in civilization as many European cities. Though essentially a Russian town, thousands of Armenians are to be found

amongst its inhabitants. To the traveller, who, like myself, happens to be there on a public holiday, the whole population appears to be given up to the pursuit of pleasure and amusement. In the park, drinking kiosks are scattered about in rich profusion ; at one of the larger ones, stood a large dummy black bottle about twelve feet high, around which I saw numbers of students sitting and drinking.

Noticing a crowd passing along one of the side streets, I followed, and came to a large and stately church. A continuous stream of people were entering its capacious doors which seemed to give forth, at the same time, another procession of pilgrims whose devotions were completed. Entering, I observed on one side a priest chanting some words from a book placed before him, whilst opposite him sat a man who was busily engaged in retailing candles to the worshippers. Round the walls hung numbers of pictures, and the worship of the majority seemed to consist in kissing the painted canvases, and spending a short time in a kneeling attitude on the marble floor, or kissing the steps of the altar.

In a corner of the church a fountain was playing. Close beside it, in the semi-darkness I noticed a woman who was devoutly crossing herself as she knelt on the floor in the attitude of prayer. She was closely watched by a tiny boy, who knelt at her side and imitated her gestures ; then, as she gently rose and kissed the pictures, his little arms went out in expectation, and he was quietly lifted from the ground that he might press his lips to one of the coloured portraits of long departed saints. I could not help wondering, as I left the building, how much these people understood of the Gospel of Christ.

Events now transpired which separated me for a time from Jacob, the Armenian, in whose company I had left England. He wished to spend a few days with friends near Erivan, the terminus of the railway journey we were

about to make, and, as I had to wait in Tiflis until the shops opened on the following day—and the trader who had joined us had some business to transact—it was thought best that Jacob should proceed at once to his friends, leaving me to follow with the trader as soon as possible. Thus, for a time, I was left alone in a strange country, dependent for interpretation, and therefore for everything, upon a man whose acquaintance I had made but a few days before, and regarding whose character I was entirely ignorant. That I afterwards had cause to regret the circumstances which brought this about, the events recorded in the next chapter will show.

CHAPTER III

AN ADVENTUROUS JOURNEY

IT was evening when I left Tiflis in company with the Armenian trader. As the morning light appeared we noticed that the country traversed was barren and hilly, and that the inhabitants of the villages through which we passed appeared to be very poor.

The railways in this part of Russia, if one may judge by appearances, are built on the principle that a roughly laid line is better than none at all. In order to avoid sharp ascents and descents, great détours and zigzags are often made in the hilly regions; consequently one may travel for a couple of miles and, having traversed this distance, find he is not much more than about half a mile from the original starting-point.

We had scarcely had time, however, to observe these things, when our train pulled up with a sudden jerk, and we were told to alight. We then saw that a large fall of rocks had occurred during the night which completely blocked the line. To have run into them would have caused a terrible accident, but our engine-driver had providentially been warned in time, and stopped the train within a few yards of the obstruction. The passengers were now obliged to lay hold of their baggage and walk to a place where another train was in readiness. This, for some who were heavily burdened with luggage, necessitated several journeys to and fro and occupied a

considerable time. Finally we made another start, and at about 10 a.m. arrived at a small country station, where all were ordered to alight.

At this place we were informed to our dismay that there were only three trains a week to the railway terminus at Erivan for which we were bound, and that the next one would not leave until the following morning. This announcement was rendered more disconcerting to me by the fact that I was among strange people whose language I did not speak, and that, therefore, I must be dependent for the next twenty-four hours on the good offices of the Armenian trader who was with me.

He explained that to sleep near the station was out of the question ; but that, at a small town in the neighbourhood, from which the station took its name, we could probably obtain accommodation. We instructed a Jehu to drive us there, and were soon bumping over a badly-made road which ran through barren and desolate country.

There was nothing attractive in the appearance of this town ; its houses were small and poorly built, and its streets narrow. Our driver took us to a wayside inn, which we were informed was as good as any other hotel in the place. It was situated at the corner of a street of poorly-built houses, and like its neighbours had a flat roof and a somewhat neglected appearance. The accommodation afforded seemed to be very limited. We were asked to share a room, and agreed to do so. It was a large old-fashioned apartment, such as one reads of in stories of haunted houses ; the whole of the walls and the ceiling were of old panelled wood, and there were several large cupboards and recesses built into the walls. On either side stood a bed ; there was a table in the centre, and two French windows at one end looked out upon a narrow side street. Its only approach was along a wide but almost dark passage, with a stone floor, and roughly plastered brick walls.

We had the whole day before us, and having nothing else to do, and my camera being loaded with pictures, I decided to employ the time by developing these. By closing up the one small window which gave a glimmer of light in the passage already referred to, and by shutting a door at either end, I made an excellent dark room. The next two hours were spent in developing photographs, a work in which I was assisted by the trader. Whilst thus engaged we spoke on a variety of topics. Several times when a lull occurred in the conversation I fancied that I heard a noise outside the door, and after finishing the work on which we had been engaged, I opened it and found there a man dressed in the uniform of a Russian soldier, who quickly turned and walked away when I appeared.

He had evidently been acting as a spy ; but this did not occur to me at the time, as, having only arrived in the country a few days previously, I was not then fully alive to the fact that the Russian Government were inclined to look with grave suspicion upon a British subject who travels alone in regions little frequented by the ordinary tourist ; nor did I think they had sufficient interest in me to cause them to allocate a man to report my movements. Never guessing that this soldier had been appointed to watch me, I regarded his presence outside the door as being perhaps accidental, and, after having some lunch, went for a walk with the trader.

We wandered through the streets and presently found ourselves in a little plot of ground which was dignified by the name of park, where numbers of Russians and Armenians were strolling about and in which a band played some military music during the afternoon. As dusk began to fall we made our way back to the "hotel." Upon reaching it I at once went to our bedroom, and on my way was surprised to be met, close to its door, by the soldier I had seen earlier in the day. He rushed past me

in a rather surprised way, and appeared to have just emerged from the apartment allotted to us. Possibly he had been either examining our luggage, or the negatives which I had developed during the morning, when my approach disturbed him.

There are places where the traveller who has a bad conscience is, in some respects, more secure than he whose intentions are innocent and guileless. The man who moves about conscious of his guilt will studiously avoid anything which might lead to suspicion falling upon him; the one who knows he is doing right, is apt to avoid behaviour that is secretive or underhand, until he learns, as he will learn if he travel in Turkey and in some parts of Russia, that spies make no allowance for frankness and openness in the character of a man they suspect, and are often ready to impute an ulterior motive to the most transparent conduct. It is well, therefore, for a man, however good his conscience—if he travel in lands where espionage prevails to the extent to which it does in these countries—to behave with as great caution as he would observe if he were a notorious criminal.

I had not then been sufficiently long in the country to have learnt this lesson; consequently, when I met this soldier for a second time, it did not occur to me that I might perhaps be regarded as an English spy, and that if this were the case the darkening of a room in order to develop photographs was an act likely to lead to serious consequences.

I returned to the public room, where the trader was waiting for me to join him at our evening meal. The soldier, who was also in it, left almost directly after my entrance, beckoning to the inn-keeper to follow him into the passage. A whispered conversation ensued in a language I was unable to understand, and my suspicions being aroused, I mentioned to the Armenian the circumstances under which I had seen the soldier earlier in the

day, and asked him to catch what was said. This he did, to the best of his ability. He appeared to be somewhat frightened at what he heard, and seemed unwilling to interpret it. I learnt, however, that the inn-keeper had been ordered by the soldier to have a carriage in readiness outside his establishment at midnight. For what purpose this vehicle was required the trader refused to say; but, as he seemed to have been upset by the conversation to which he had listened, I took an opportunity, after we had retired to our room, to press him for information on this point.

Turning to me with a scared look, he said, "I have found out that the house we are in has a bad reputation, but remember, I promise you that whatever may happen to you during the night, I will telegraph to the nearest British Consul in the morning."

This was not a very comforting message with which to go to bed, especially as it shewed that whatever plot was being hatched, was directed against me alone, and did not include himself.

"Let us go to another hotel," I said.

"I have made enquiry," he replied, "and find that there are none which are any better than this; all have a bad character."

I looked out of the window and saw that the streets were dark and deserted. There seemed to be no alternative but to stay where we were; it was nearly ten o'clock, and most of the people in the town had evidently retired to rest.

Before going to bed I was careful to see that the key was turned in the lock. If the Russian Government had decided that I was a spy, I might expect a short shrift at their hands—a midnight drive into the country, a mock trial, and perhaps a speedy execution before dawn—for, as a spy is not able to claim the protection of his Government, it might be thought quite right to dispose of me in this way.

Such reflections did not induce sleep very readily, and I was still awake when I heard a loud scraping noise in one of the cupboards on the other side of the room.

Calling to the Armenian, I asked whether he knew the cause, and, on his replying in the negative, got up to make investigations, whereupon the noise suddenly ceased.

I returned to bed, and had lain awake for some time, when another disturbance came, this time from a most unexpected quarter. I heard the trader moving stealthily on the other side of the room; there was a step on the floor, then another; evidently he had got out of bed.

Judging by the sounds, he appeared to be making his way across the room; presently his form loomed up in the darkness close to my bed. Without uttering a word, he silently came nearer and nearer to where I lay.

“What do you want?” I called.

Finding I was awake, he flashed a light into my face, almost blinding me for a moment.

“What did you get up for just now? You have been robbing me!” he said, then slowly retreated across the room, still keeping the light from his electric torch fixed upon me.

Nonplussed by his strange conduct and this accusation and suspecting that he was trying to pick a quarrel, I assured him he was mistaken.

He sullenly lighted the candle, looked through his merchandise to see that all was there, then sat on the edge of the bed, and taking his purse from under his pillow counted his money to make sure that none had gone. Clad only in night attire, his black beard and bushy eyebrows making him look intensely fierce in the dim candle light, I could have smiled at his ludicrous appearance had it not been for the serious charge he had preferred against me. Finding that everything was safe, he put out the light and got into bed.

As I lay awake I thought of the strange way in which

this man had joined us, of his extraordinary behaviour that night, and, knowing that Armenians were sometimes employed as spies, began to wonder whether he were one, and if so whether he were in league with the soldier who had ordered the carriage.

It was nearly midnight, and very dark, when for the third time I tried to go to sleep. I was just dozing off, when I was aroused by the sound of carriage wheels in the street outside the inn; which told me that the expected vehicle had arrived. Listening intently I then heard stealthy footsteps approaching along the stone passage which led to our apartment. The handle was tried, and finding that the door was locked the midnight visitor stole silently away.

Outside in the town perfect stillness reigned, but everyone in the inn seemed to be awake, for I could hear the sound of an angry discussion being carried on in some other part of the building. Calling to the trader, I enquired whether he had heard the door being tried, and whether he knew the reason for it. On being told of the attempt that had been made, he immediately got out of bed, and without replying to my question, or giving any explanation of his conduct, lighted the candle, rang the bell violently, then, after turning the key, threw the door wide open that any might enter who wished. This unexpected action made me wonder whether he were in league with the hotel people, and remembering his previous behaviour, I thought it best to do all in my power to oppose any plot that might have been arranged.

Instead of one servant answering the bell, five or six people hurried to the room, but, before they had time to reach the door, I closed and locked it, putting the key into my pocket so as to prevent the trader from opening it again. I was in a dilemma. The people outside were banging angrily at the door, and I feared they would break it open, whilst inside the room the Armenian

was demanding that I should give him the key, or else let them in.

I opened the window which overlooked a side street. All was quiet, but I could see that a carriage was standing near the front of the inn with lights burning. It was a drop of about eight feet to the ground. Should I go now and risk capture in the street below, or should I wait until the door gave way? It was a risky expedient to attempt to escape in a town with whose inhabitants, even could I awaken some of them, I could not converse, and to whom I was an absolute stranger. I therefore decided to remain with the trader as long as that was possible.

After awhile, the people outside the door, finding their efforts fruitless, ceased their incessant banging, and went away to another part of the building, where they continued to talk loudly, and seemed to be discussing whether they should break in the door or not. Evidently they decided not to do so, as they did not return again.

Meanwhile, inside the room the man who had so strangely joined company with me was angrily pacing up and down, demanding the key, and denouncing me for suspecting him, quite forgetful of the fact that an hour earlier he had accused me of robbing him. He refused to go back to bed, and had I not been a good deal his superior in height, would, I believe, have tried to obtain the key by force.

When all was quiet again, and I felt sure that there was nobody outside the door, I quietly opened it and allowed him to slip out, upon condition that he did not return. I hoped by this means to be able to get a little sleep myself, but I found that the fear of another trick being played made this impossible. With a lighted candle beside me, and the window wide open to be ready for an emergency, I sat through the dreary hours of the

night, occasionally varying the monotony by reading a little.

Never has dawn been more welcome than it was that morning to a weary traveller who sat beside his luggage in the room of a small inn in the Caucasus, counting the hours which must intervene before he could drive away from a "hotel" in which he had passed the most terrible night in his whole experience.

As soon as a carriage could be procured I went to the station, preferring to wait there until the train started. Had I not been dependent on the trader for interpretation, I would have parted from him here, but under the circumstances thought it best to remain with him until able to rejoin the other Armenian, who had gone ahead to Etchmiadzin.

The explanation of the doings of the preceding night, as given by him, was not such as to satisfy me, but whether or not he had been in league with the hotel people, or what his motives were for behaving so strangely I never discovered. He told me that after leaving the bedroom he went into the bar, where he sat drinking for several hours, and finally slept in another room.

The railway journey from the town in which I had this experience to Erivan occupied the whole of a day. Lack of space forbids my giving details of it and recounting another exciting experience which I had in company with this Armenian. Suffice it to say that I was greatly relieved a few days later when I took my seat beside him in a carriage which was to drive us the fourteen miles from Erivan to Etchmiadzin, at which place I had arranged to rejoin the other Armenian.

The plain, across which our road lay, was stony and arid, affording but poor nourishment to the scant vegetation which essayed to grow upon its surface. Its barren appearance was, however, somewhat relieved by the bright coloured plumage of the birds, which flitted across

the roadway, or stared at us from the adjacent telegraph wires.

The two or three villages passed through were Oriental in character. The houses were of mud, and had flat roofs, on many of which wooden bedsteads had been built in such a manner as to allow the inmates to sleep out of doors, whilst at the same time protecting them from the attacks of wild animals during the night.

Here and there groups of women were to be seen, standing in a doorway chatting, or sitting on the ground in the shade of a house spinning and sewing, their brightly dyed dresses lending a very pretty touch of colour to the scene.

Upon arriving at Etchmiadzin, a name which means "The descent of the Only Begotten," I was met by Jacob. It is a place of great historic interest as being the head of the Armenian churches and the residence of the Patriarch.

The church is prettily situated close to the foot of Mount Ararat in a district which has always been regarded as the central province of Armenia, and numbers of Armenians are to be found, not only at Etchmiadzin, but throughout the whole of the land over which they once held sway.

This nation traces its descent from a man named Hayk, a son of the Togarmah mentioned in the Bible,* as having been a grandson of Japhet, the son of Noah. It is referred to in Ezekiel under the title of "the house of Togarmah" as trading in horses and mules,† and Armenia is mentioned in the Old Testament as being the district to which the sons of Sennacherib fled, after slaying their father.‡

The boundaries of the Armenian kingdom varied somewhat under successive rulers, and at different times have extended to the Caspian, the Mediterranean, and the

*Gen. x. 3. †Ezek. xxvii. 14. ‡2 Kings xix. 37.

Black Seas. The nation probably reached the zenith of its prosperity over one hundred years before the time of Christ, and down to the invasion of the Turks in the eleventh century it was always a powerful factor in the conflicts between East and West.

The land itself is a huge tableland, varying in height from 4,000 to 7,000 feet, a land of bold, steep mountains and narrow gorges and valleys, interspersed with small stretches of flat country which are well adapted for cultivation. Four great rivers have their source in this extensive plateau: the Choruk, which flows into the Black Sea; the Kur, flowing into the Caspian; and the Euphrates and Tigris, which run southwards ere they unite to pour their waters into the Persian Gulf.

Close to its southern boundary lies the road from Assyria to Egypt traversed by the patriarch Abraham, the great highway on which armies passed and re-passed, and which too often became the scene of mighty conflicts.

The geographical position of Armenia was a factor which always militated against a very long-lived prosperity, for whilst, as a "buffer state," situated in the natural gateway between the great nations of East and West, she could glean from the experiences of both, she was always liable to come in for blows from either side, or to be subject to one or other of these powers, for whom her territory often formed a battleground, and became a bone of contention.

In A.D. 1828 and 1829, Russia took a portion of Armenia, which she has since retained, and as Etchmiadzin was in the territory conquered, the chief Gregorian church came under Russian jurisdiction, whilst the territory which in bygone days belonged to the kingdom of Armenia is now divided between Russia, Persia, and Turkey, the frontiers of these three countries meeting on Mount Ararat, and, with the exception of a few who still retain some independence in the more

inaccessible mountain fastnesses of Turkey, the Armenians have no land which they can call their own.

Their patriotism is a strong feature in their character, and this, together with a wonderful recuperative power which they possess, has often enabled them to rise phoenix-like from disasters which would have ruined other nations. It is remarkable that, although they have been, for many years, without a king or government, they still—like the Jews—exist as a distinct nationality having a language of their own. Many remain in their native land, which is now to them little more than a record-book of bygone greatness, a necropolis of perished hopes; but numbers have emigrated to other countries where they still, to a great extent, maintain their individuality as a nation.

The Armenian church was founded by "Gregory the Illuminator," who was ordained Patriarch A.D. 302, and from whom it takes the name "Gregorian." The story of his life, and the conversion of the king and nation to Christianity, is one of the most interesting in history.

The main portion of the church at Etchmiadzin is stated, on good authority, to have been built, during the fourth century, under the direction of St. Gregory; and, whilst staying there, I had an excellent opportunity of viewing this historic building, which I must not linger to describe.

It would not, however, be right to mention Etchmiadzin without making some reference to Megerdich Khrimean, the present Patriarch, a fine, stately old man, now approaching his eighty-seventh year. His firm but aquiline face, in which kindness and sympathy are predominant features, his long, grey beard, his noble bearing, make all who meet him feel that they are in the presence of one who is well fitted to adorn the office which he holds. He is one of those rare men who are not only interested in the welfare of all whom they may meet,

but possess the power, by unostentatious acts of goodness of making them feel this interest. To him no human soul, whether beggar or prince, would appear small or insignificant, and each would receive equal consideration and courtesy at his hand—the poor being able to feel as much at home in his presence as the rich.

Before leaving Etchmiadzin I was accorded an interview with this venerable head of the church. At the hour appointed I was led from the large quadrangle, in which this building stands, into a well-kept garden, from which access was gained to the residence of the Catholicos. Upon ascending to the first floor, I was ushered into an apartment furnished in semi-oriental style. On a small platform at one side of the room was placed a chair, on which the Patriarch was seated. After the usual greetings, he conversed on the condition of his people, mentioning some of the difficulties with which they had to contend. It was an interview which I will long remember as having brought me into contact with a man who, often in the face of great opposition and persecution, has throughout a long life-time nobly upheld the cause of the downtrodden and the oppressed.

Amongst the flock of which he is the spiritual head he is renowned for his humility of mind, and it is well known that he entertains no desire for the pomp and splendour which in such a position he might rightly claim. The dignity of his office sits lightly upon him; the welfare of his people is a subject of far greater moment, and he is continually busy with plans for their social and moral betterment. Mr. Lynch tells a very interesting story illustrative of the "magnetic influence which, through a long life, he has exercised over his countrymen."

Before being exalted to the pontifical chair, he taught for some time in a school which he had founded within the walls of Varag monastery, a building which is situated on the mountain of the same name close to the

town of Van. One day, whilst descending the lonely path which led from the cloister to the little church, on the outskirts of the city, in which he often preached, an assassin "laid in wait for him, deputed by his enemies to kill him as he rode unaccompanied towards the town." So great, however, was the power which he exercised by his force of character and deep spirituality that on his approach the man lowered the rifle which he had raised to fire, "a sudden fear seized his limbs, his arm shook like a wand; and he fell upon his knees before his victim, whose look he had been unable to bear." *

The form of service in the churches of which this man is the spiritual head is somewhat similar to that of the Greek churches. The language used is old Armenian, which is no more understood by the majority of worshippers than Latin. A prayer-book is used which, in many respects, resembles the Anglican one, but has, in addition, prayers to the saints and the Virgin Mary. In most churches there is a choir composed largely of boys; and a considerable part of the service is responsive. Certain things, such as portions from the Gospels, are read by the priest, or other person appointed, and there are usually no sermons. Most of the ordinary priests do not preach, that work being reserved for higher dignitaries. Many days throughout the year are observed as fasts.

Two services are held daily, morning and evening, each lasting about half an hour, except on special occasions and festivals, when a service is held lasting for several hours. The usual form of worship which a layman goes through, both on Sundays or week-days, is as follows:—

Entering the church unshod, he stands and prays, facing the East and the altar, then, crossing himself, he murmurs the Lord's Prayer in the old Armenian language, after which he asks forgiveness for sins, repeat-

* *Armenia*, by H. F. B. Lynch.

ing such phrases as "God have mercy on me a sinner," etc. Anthems and chants are then repeated in the ancient tongue, and he brings his devotions to a conclusion by again saying the Lord's Prayer. At intervals during the service he kneels and puts his head on the ground to worship God, or in humiliation before Him; then, standing again, he crosses himself. The women worship apart from the men.

The priests receive no salary, and live on the freewill offerings of the people to whom they minister. At different seasons they go round and "bless the houses" by saying certain prayers in them, and it is customary for the inmates to bestow a gift upon them at such times. This ceremony only takes place a few times during the year. Armenian priests are free to marry, but to do so prevents promotion to a bishopric. The unmarried ones are known as "vartabeds," and wear a distinctive head-dress.

Numbers of monasteries are to be found in Asiatic Turkey, especially in the vilayets of Van and Bitlis, and most of them date back many centuries. The monks live mainly on the incomes derived from lands or property attached to these buildings. They used to employ themselves largely in writing copies of the Gospels, and I was fortunate, when in Turkey, in securing some of these manuscripts, which date back many centuries.

The Armenian Church deserves to rank high among the Churches of the East, for though she has, during succeeding generations, been called upon to pass through periods of the most terrible persecution, though her sons and daughters have always had to bear the full brunt of Moslem bitterness and oppression, and though she has repeatedly had to seal her witness with her blood, she still continues to uphold, amidst savagery and barbarism, the standard of the Cross, and, though her faith is somewhat shrouded by ignorance and superstition, the power

has not wholly departed from her testimony, nor has her martyr spirit left her.

The few days at Etchmiadzin passed all too quickly. The quiet restfulness of the surroundings, the solemn and reverent awe with which the priests, clad in sombre black, moved to and fro within the precincts of the sacred enclosure, the simplicity of the life with its plain and wholesome fare, made this a delightful change for one accustomed to the bustle and noise of European life.

When the time came for our departure, we hired a conveyance, which, though its seats were arranged in a similar fashion to those on Irish jaunting cars, was much longer than those vehicles and had none of their springiness. After going for about four miles in this contrivance our Jehu informed us that his horses were too tired to proceed any farther.

We were on a country road, with no town or village in sight, and had with us a considerable amount of luggage. The driver pulled his conveyance to the side of the road, unharnessed his three sorry steeds, and went back to the town to obtain others in their place. Whilst one of the party mounted guard over our stranded belongings, I took advantage of the delay to inspect the ruins of an old church which were close at hand. Part of the walls was all that remained standing, but the capitals and bases strewn about on what had been its stone floor gave evidence of its having been at one time a fine and costly structure. Several excavators, under the supervision of a Russian Cossack, were hard at work digging for relics.

A shout from the distance soon apprised me of the fact that our driver had returned. We again made a start, but the fresh relay of horses which he had brought proved to be very incompetent and weakly; however, after five hours, we finally completed the fourteen miles, and arrived at Erivan.

Were I to include in this story the account of my

journeys and experiences in Persia it would enlarge this volume beyond the size desired. I therefore propose to pass over these, and bring the reader at once to Ooroomiah, the Persian town, in which, after parting company with the trader and the other Armenian, I eventually found myself, and from which I started out to cross the frontier into Turkey.

CHAPTER IV

THE COUNTRY OF THE KOORDS

AS I had been obliged to leave England at very short notice I was unable to ascertain, before starting, what had been the exact nature of Mr. Millard's work, and also what were the particular localities in which he had laboured. The letter of enquiry written in order to find out brought no response, consequently, after completing certain duties which devolved upon me in Persia, I found myself still in the dark as to how best to fulfil the special errand on which I had set out.

Meanwhile I occupied myself with the study of the language, conducting services as opportunity offered. I had not mentioned to anyone the work that I hoped to do, but, whilst I was praying for guidance, the same Holy Spirit, under whose influence I had been led to go out, was directing a missionary to come over from Turkey to the town of Ooroomiah, in which I was residing, who, soon after his arrival, gave me the information desired.

A few days after we had welcomed this visitor some new missionaries were expected to arrive from America, and, as is the custom, a number of workers drove out to meet them and arranged to give them a breakfast under the trees, before they entered the town which was to be the scene of their future labours. This delightful picnic being over, we were preparing to return to the city when the missionary who had come from Turkey a few days previously, asked me to drive back with him. This

invitation I gladly accepted, and as we sped along over the dusty road, conversing on various topics, he mentioned Mr. Millard's name.

"Did you know him?" I asked.

"Yes," was the reply, "he visited our mission station some years ago and conducted special services, and I should be very glad if you could come over and do some work on similar lines."

"That is the purpose for which God sent me out," I answered, "and I will be glad to come at once."

Upon the question of expense being mentioned, feeling conscious of the fact that God had guided me in undertaking the work, I expressed my readiness to visit all mission stations which had benefited under the labours of my predecessor, free of all charge to the Missionary Society, on whose funds I did not wish to be a burden.

A few days previous to this I had had a telegram from the British Consul-General saying that he had received some money for me, a sum which was quite sufficient to defray the initial expenses of my journey across the frontier; and I felt that as God had so graciously provided this in answer to prayer, and even before He had made it clear where I was to go, He would have me trust Him throughout the journey, to supply each need as it arose. Although therefore I did not have anything like a sufficient sum to pay my expenses in visiting these mission stations, I was able to make this offer in faith, knowing that the Lord would provide, and that in so far as I sought first the kingdom of God "all other things would be added."

Being obliged to delay my departure until I had obtained a Turkish *visa* on my passport, it was impossible for me to accompany, on his return journey, the missionary who had invited me. Several weeks passed before I was able to make a start, but eventually on a wet morning in October I left Ooroomiah for the

Turkish town of Van, and was fortunate for the first three days in having the company of Mr. Sterrett, a missionary who was returning to his work in the mountains, and who promised that, before leaving me, he would put me on the road for Van.

A friend gave me a timely warning. He had recently had a fine new Bible confiscated at the Turkish frontier, and he advised me if I wished mine to escape a similar fate to erase from the maps which it contained, the word "Armenia," the name of a land which the Turks maintain is non-existent, the territory which formed it having been incorporated into their empire. Having fulfilled this injunction, I secured my Bible in the folds of a waterproof, which was fixed to the back of my saddle, and managed to get it through into the country for which I was bound, without any trouble.

It was with no very pleasant anticipations that, early on a fine afternoon, we came, on rounding the corner of a hill, into full view of the little village which marked the frontier. Situated on a knoll of rising ground, it consisted of a few mud houses, on the roofs of some of which the tents of the Custom's officials were pitched. Their chief spoke some French; after examining my few effects, and after a *backsheesh* of about twelve shillings had been paid on them, he found that they included nothing of a contraband character and allowed me to proceed.

We were now obliged to engage the services of two *zabtiehs*, and as I will have occasion to mention these officials frequently, I give a short description here.

The Government of Turkey will not hold itself responsible for the safety of any travellers who journey unaccompanied by one or more of these men, who are quite as much a national institution as either policemen or soldiers. They wear an ill-fitting blue uniform ornamented with yellow braid, which is often, however,

so shabby as to be indistinguishable from ordinary clothing. All carry a gun and some have horses. They have distinctive duties to perform, one of the chief of these being the collection of taxes, and another the protection, in certain cases, of local officials.

It also falls to their lot to accompany, on their journeyings, any Europeans who may enter the country. Though this is done nominally for the purpose of shielding such from harm, the real object of the zabtieh's presence is espionage. The farce of pretending that they can protect travellers in any practical manner, is demonstrated by the fact, that, although provided with guns, they are not allowed to use them for this purpose nor may they let their weapons be used by the travellers they are supposed to safeguard. It is a generally recognised fact that if there is any grave danger threatening, the zabtieh is one of the first to show a clean pair of heels, for it could not be expected that a Moslem would shoot one of his co-religionists merely in order to save the life of a Christian.

They are sometimes in league with the Koords, who agree, in return for their services in running away from a caravan which they have been hired to protect, to give them afterwards a share of the plunder. It must be admitted, however, that when they have not thus committed themselves, their presence is, to a certain extent, a safeguard, as brigands naturally prefer to attack caravans which are not escorted by a Government representative. Everything depends on the character of the man. A good zabtieh is well worth having, a bad one is often worse than useless.

It is the custom of some officials, after expatiating on the dangers of the road to try and foist about half a dozen zabtiehs on the traveller, which, as they will all require to be paid, is rather too much for the purse of a missionary; in addition to this, the presence of so many

of them in a village where he may be staying is a great hindrance to his work, and, notwithstanding the fact that they receive money with which to purchase their food, they will oblige the villagers, if Christians, to board and lodge them free of charge. For this reason missionaries have to hesitate considerably before deciding to visit their out-stations. On more than one occasion poor villagers who, under ordinary circumstances, would have welcomed the prolonged stay of a missionary, have been reluctantly compelled to send a deputation beseeching him to "depart out of their coasts," as they could not afford the expense of entertaining his bevy of accompanying zabtiehs.

Having secured our two zabtiehs at the frontier, we eventually, after many interesting experiences which I must pass over, reached the town of Dizza, at which I had to part company from my missionary friend and set out alone upon the journey to Van.

Dizza is situated on a slight eminence, at one end of the plain of Gower—a flat expanse, over five thousand feet above sea level, which is believed to be an old lake bed, and is surrounded by high snow-capped mountains. The lower slopes of these, once covered with cattle, are now almost entirely devoid of them, owing to the plundering propensities of the wild tribes, known as Koords, who inhabit many parts of Asiatic Turkey, but who are specially fierce and lawless in this district.

The journey I was about to undertake lay through a part of Koordistan in which travellers have been frequently attacked by these brigands. They are a distinct race, who, from time immemorial, appear to have existed in some or other of the mountain fastnesses of Persia and Turkey, and under the name of "Cardouchi" are referred to by Xenophon as having harassed the Ten Thousand on their famous march, about 400 B.C.

Although residing chiefly in the mountains, they are

frequently to be met with in the plains, and sometimes come to the cities to make purchases or arrange for robberies. In many towns they have agents appointed to discover the value and contents of caravans ere they leave the town; thus, they can undertake systematically the plunder of those that are worth robbing. On arriving in a village at night, I have often had some of them come and take stock of my belongings, and then watch me undress in order to discover whether I were armed.

The bigotry of ignorance is always the worst form of bigotry, and the Koords, who are mostly of the Moslem persuasion, and have even less education than the Turks, usually exceed them in fanaticism. They are split up into different tribes, each under its own chief, and these often have feuds with one another. The chief assets in the outfit of a Koord are a good gun, a large belt full of cartridges, a sharp dagger, and a swift horse—on which things he bestows the bulk of his attention. So long as there is game to be hunted, so long as there are Christian villagers to be plundered, and travellers and caravans to be robbed, these articles spell livelihood to the Koordish mind: and usually it is only when trade is slack in these lines that he condescends to till the soil.

He places but little value on human life, and when it is the life of a Christian, apparently thinks less of taking it than he would of killing his dog. I might give many instances of this, but the following which took place in a village, which had best be nameless, just a few months before the time of which I write, must suffice.

A party of Koords arrived at this place, and the inhabitants, being Armenians, were, as is customary, ordered to provide their visitors with food.

The Armenian priest, hoping, perhaps, to keep them from going to houses where there were girls in the family, took them to his own home and provided them with a good meal, setting before them the very best that could



A KOORDISH CHIEF AND HIS ATTENDANT.

be provided from the scanty larders of himself and friends.

When their appetites were satisfied, some of the food remained over. They then deliberately killed their host, and, after mixing his blood with this, took their departure.

To deal with men who place such small value on human life is certainly a difficult matter, and in order to ensure the allegiance of these tribes, and also doubtless to keep them somewhat under his control, the Sultan in 1891 formed them into bodies of irregular cavalry, which are called after him the Hamidieh. This has increased their power for evil very greatly, by making them officials whilst not at the same time especially subject to the civil power. The civil governors and the military do not in general interfere with them, the consequence being that they are usually left free to act out their own sweet will.

The way in which the Koords are given a free hand to rob and plunder the Christians, a permission for which they often pay heavy bribes, is well illustrated in a conversation which Dr. Lepsius, with a great deal of difficulty, was able to have with Mostigo, a celebrated Koordish brigand and Hamidieh officer, who, being imprisoned and expecting a death sentence for certain offences, was willing to speak freely of his past life.

By giving hostages for his return, Dr. Lepsius secured his release from prison for one night. As evening fell, the dangerous criminal was secretly conveyed over the roofs of some houses in Erzeroum to an apartment in which he remained all night to reply to the questions put to him, some of which, with their answers, are given below.

Q. 'Now, Mostigo, I desire to hear from your own lips and to write down some of your wonderful deeds. I want to make them known to the "hat-wearers." '*

* The Koords call all Europeans hat-wearers.

A. 'Even so. Announce them to the Twelve Powers.' *

Q. 'I am sorry to find that you are living in prison. Have you been long there?'

A. 'I too am sorry. Five months, but it seems an age.'

Q. 'These Armenians are to blame, I suppose?'

A. 'Yes.'

Q. 'You wiped out too many of them, carried off their women, burned their villages, and made it generally hot for them, I am told?'

A. (scornfully) 'That has nothing to do with my imprisonment. I shall not be punished for plundering Armenians. We all do that. I seldom killed except when they resisted. But the Armenians betrayed me and I was caught. That's what I mean. But if I be hanged it will be for attacking and robbing the Turkish post and violating the wife of a Turkish colonel who is now here in Erzeroum. But not for Armenians! Who are they, that I should suffer for them?'

Q. 'Do the Armenians ever offer you resistance when you take their cattle and their women?'

A. 'Not often. They cannot. They have no arms, and they know that even if they could kill a few of us it would do them no good, for other Koords would come and take vengeance; but when we kill them no one's eyes grow large with rage. The Turks hate them, and we do not. We only want money and spoil, and some Koords also want their lands, but the Turks want their lives.'

Q. 'Did you kill many Armenians generally?'

A. 'Yes. We did not wish to do so. We only want booty, not lives. Lives are of no use to us. But we had to drive bullets through people at times, to keep them quiet; that is, if they resisted.'

Q. 'Do you often use your daggers?'

A. 'No; generally our rifles. We must live. In autumn

* *i.e.*, to the whole universe.

we manage to get as much corn as we need for the winter, and money besides. We have cattle, but we take no care of it. We give it to the Armenians to look after and feed.'

Q. 'But, if they refuse?'

A. 'Well, we burn their hay, their corn, their houses, and we drive off their sheep; so they do not refuse. We take back our cattle in spring, and the Armenians must return the same number that they received.'

Q. 'But if cattle disease should carry them off?'

A. 'That is the Armenians' affair. They must return us what we gave them, or an equal number. And they know it. We cannot bear the loss. Why should not they? Nearly all our sheep come from them.'

After this notorious brigand had recounted scores of stories of expeditions, murders, and rapes; in which he told of villages attacked, people killed, houses gutted, money, carpets, sheep and women carried off and travellers robbed, he was asked: 'Can you tell some more of your daring deeds, Mostigo, for the ears of the Twelve Powers?' to which question, his reply, full of significance, was as follows:

'Once the wolf was asked: Tell us something about the sheep you devoured?' and he said, 'I ate thousands of sheep, which of them are you talking about? Even so it is with my deeds. If I spoke and you wrote for two days, much would still remain untold.'

Needing money, this man robbed; desirous of pleasure, he dishonoured women and girls; defending his booty, he killed men and women, and during it all he felt absolutely certain of impunity so long as his victims were Armenians. Is there no law then? one is tempted to ask. There is, and a very good law for that corner of the globe were it only administered; for the moment he robbed the Imperial post and dishonoured a Turkish woman he was found worthy of death.*

**Armenia and Europe*, by J. Lepsius, Ph.D.

The replies of this outlaw shew well the attitude of his race towards Armenians. The chief regret which a Koord is likely to have when he considers it necessary to shoot a Christian, is, that he is obliged to use a bullet for which he has paid a sum equal to about four English pence. As walnuts are much more plentiful, a common saying is: "We ought not to have to use bullets to kill Christians, we ought to be able to kill them with walnuts."

One cannot compare the ruthless and lawless brutality, barbarity, and brigandage of these men, with the meek and submissive patience of those upon whom they most often prey, without wishing that they too might have been influenced by those truths which have so uplifted and changed the lives of their victims, and, if any proof were needed of the regenerating power of Christianity, it would surely be furnished by such a contrast.

But to return to the account of my journey. I was starting quite alone, without either servant or dragoman and entirely unarmed through a district where these lawless brigands ruled almost supreme. Knowing, however, that I had undertaken the journey in order to accomplish a work which God had given me to do, I believed that He would be with and protect me, and I went forward trusting Him to do so.

My first difficulty was in hiring horses. The Government were commandeering all they could lay their hands on, in order to convey a party of soldiers to another district. For this reason, those villagers who possessed horses did not bring them near the town, and those few in Dizza who had any were afraid, because of the Koordish robbers on the road, to venture on the journey. At last, after two or three days spent in negotiations, I was able, by a large *backsheesh* to a police officer, to secure a horse, with the half use of a second one for my baggage. These animals were only going as far as Bashkala, a town half way to Van, at which I hoped to be

able to procure others for the journey thence to my destination.

The zabtieh, who had been appointed to accompany me, called, in rather a frightened condition, and begged me not to start until another caravan was going, as our party was too small for so dangerous a road. He showed me his gun, which was practically useless, but, as in any case, he was restricted from firing it, a modern rifle would not have been any more serviceable. That the journey was an unusually dangerous one there seemed to be little doubt. Very few Europeans or Americans had traversed the district, but of those who had a good proportion had met with rather exciting experiences through the attacks of robbers.

It was not encouraging to be told stories of these attacks. On the road I was about to follow, a Consul, Colonel Clayton, had been fired upon, and since then a German scientist, whilst travelling along it, had suddenly been surrounded by armed Koords, and only escaped plunder, and perhaps more evil consequences, by leading the bandits to believe that he was a British Consul. A more recent attack, which had occurred only a short time previous to my journey, was that made upon an American missionary whilst traversing this route.

Arriving at nightfall near a village and having tents with him, he pitched his camp a short distance from it, thinking that he was near enough to be secure. At dead of night he was aroused by the sound of firing. The encampment had been attacked by Koords. His zabtieh, anxious to see what was wrong, rushed, in the darkness, to the door of the tent, but had no sooner reached it than he was shot, and fell dead in the entrance. All the horses belonging to the party were driven off, but the missionary fortunately escaped unharmed.

Shortly after leaving Dizza my load overbalanced, causing the saddle to slip round on the horse and nearly

bringing that animal to the ground. This is a very usual occurrence, and, as I had been learning patience by my travels, it was no inconvenience to wait for a quarter of an hour until the load was re-adjusted. Fortunately a *yooz bahshee* (head of one hundred soldiers) happened to be departing from the town at the same time as myself, and, as he was going in the same direction, travelled with me. Leaving the plain, we entered a wide valley, riding along a narrow footpath which skirted one side of the mountains.

After proceeding for some considerable distance, we halted for lunch, then, continuing our journey up this gorge, came to a place where the track we were following was intersected by another valley, on the opposite side of which rose an abrupt and steep mountain, up which our path led. Numbers of trees grew in the intersecting valley, and as we approached I saw, to my astonishment, the *yooz bahshee* suddenly dismount and hide himself and his horse in a small clump of these.

Although it is the correct thing for the zabtieh to ride in front, as soon as we had crossed the valley and were about to commence the ascent, this man halted and appeared afraid to go on. These men know all the places where robbers are likely to be in hiding, and we had evidently reached a dangerous part of the road. It was an ideal spot for the purposes of brigandage, far away from any town or human habitation; a place where bandits might attack with impunity, and where, if a whole party were murdered, it might be some days before anything were known of the foul deed, or the bodies found. I looked at the mountain before us, and noticed a little way up, and at the side of the road, a large wooded hollow which was apparently the hiding-place in which the brigands, if such there were, might be concealed.

It was a critical time. The horse driver and the *yooz*

bahshee were both hiding amongst the trees on one side of the little stream which flowed at the foot of the mountain, whilst I was on the other side with the *zabtieh*, waiting for him to take the lead, which he declined to do. Whilst, however, he sat on his horse close to the stream, firmly refusing to budge, he was earnest in his endeavours to get me to go on alone, intending, I suppose, to see whether I drew the fire of the enemy, and, if not, to follow at a safe distance.

The sun was fiercely hot, perfect stillness reigned in the valley ; to go back was out of the question, yet I felt sure that if I went forward alone and were attacked I would be left to my fate by my poorly armed and none too brave *zabtieh*.

But "the Angel of His Presence" was with me, and realising that it is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in *zabtiehs*, I rode on up the mountain-side and passed the dangerous hollow without a shot being fired.

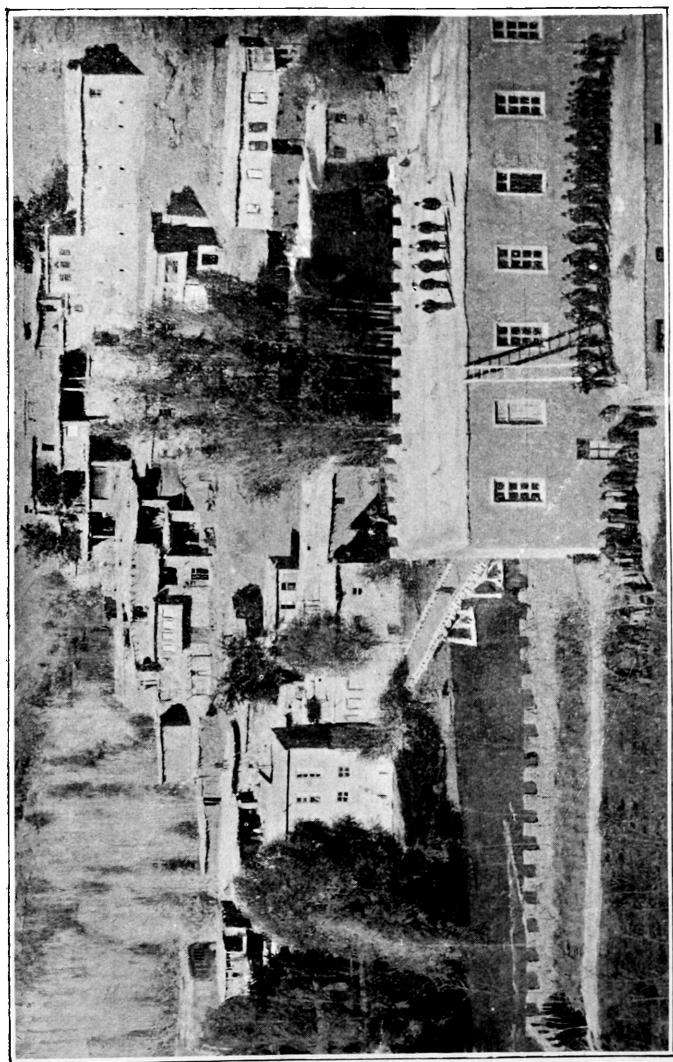
On seeing that I had passed it safely the others followed. The climb was a very steep one, and we had to lead the horses. After we had reached the top of the mountain the *zabtieh* informed me that five men, armed with rifles, had been concealed amongst the bushes.

At about four o'clock that afternoon we arrived at a Koordish village, where we were obliged to pass the night. As the Koords are often at variance with one another, their houses are so constructed that, in the event of the village being attacked, it would be almost impossible for the marauders to enter the dwellings without great loss of life. Upon entering the first door I found that I was in a dark passage, and had to give myself up, with as much confidence as possible, to the guidance of an armed Koord, who, had his intentions been unfriendly, could have despatched me on the way. There were so many doors, and such numerous turnings

in this passage, that it would have taken some time for any robbers to have found the living room, even had they been able to effect an entrance. Altogether I had to pass through four doors before arriving at the apartment which had been assigned to me for the night.

As is customary, it had straw mats placed on either side of the fire-place, and on the top of these, carpets or felt for sitting upon. There were no windows, nor was there any means of ventilation, excepting a tiny hole in the roof, which could be stopped up in case of danger. I sometimes wondered what these holes were for, as, more often than not, I found them entirely closed either with a cloth or by a piece of stone placed on top. The chimney was a very small one, and, as is usual on such occasions, the room was soon full of blinding smoke, which made one's eyes smart until they shed copious tears. The situation was soon improved by the appearance of hot tea and coffee, which, together with the food provided, made things seem comparatively comfortable. The men continued to smoke, chat, and drink tea or coffee far into the night, whilst I went to bed and sought to get to sleep, an endeavour which met with only partial success.

The *cartrijee* who was with me was an amusing character. He knew one English word, which was aired on every possible occasion. It was the word "Mister," the Turkish equivalent of which is "Effendi." But not knowing the exact meaning of it, he always addressed me as "Mr. Effendi." He was very good natured, doing everything possible for my comfort, but unfortunately took a passionate liking to an American bridle which I had, and I discovered, after paying him off at Bashkala the following day, that it was missing. However, with the aid of the British Vice-Consul from Van, who was fortunately in Bashkala on the night of my arrival, I speedily recovered it.



SHADAKH.

A picturesque town, situated on a tributary of the Tigris. It was after leaving this place the British Consul was attacked by Koords.

I was always glad to find a British Consul in a town ; the presence of these Government representatives certainly seems to exercise a restraining influence upon the Moslems, though that Consuls themselves are not entirely immune from danger is proved by the following story of how one was attacked by Koords, not far from this district, in the year 1900, and narrowly escaped with his life, his dragoman, Mr. Spordoni, receiving a flesh wound in the arm.

Major Maunsell, who was then Vice-Consul at Van, had started out for a short tour in the mountains, and after visiting a picturesque town named Shadakh, "swung around towards Julamerk, but before reaching that place he and his dragoman found themselves among the tribal Koords, and were obliged to spend the night at one of their encampments. Several attempts were made during the night to draw their fire, but they kept quiet, though alert. In the morning when they started out it was evident that the Koords from that and neighbouring camps were planning mischief, and before they had gone far they found themselves surrounded by some fifty armed men, whose numbers increased to a hundred or more.

The three zabtiehs proved useless, and only the Major and Mr. Spordoni had rifles. They took the best position they could and defended themselves vigorously. Mr. Spordoni was soon disabled by a bullet through his right arm, and the Major was left alone. They thought they killed at least four of the Koords, but they had not sufficient force to rescue their loads, which fell into the enemy's hands. After half an hour or more of pretty warm work they managed to get back Mr. Spordoni's horse, collect the men of the party, and beat a retreat, leaving all the loads in the enemy's hands."

I believe Mr. Spordoni was rewarded by the British Government for his bravery. Certainly the gain in prestige amongst that particular tribe appears to have

been remarkable. It is reported that they are now possessed with an intense respect for a British subject, and, when the incident is referred to, are wont to exclaim, in admiration of the Consul's telling fire, "We thought he was a man, not an angel!"

When a Consul, having the British nation behind him, can thus be attacked with impunity, it can be well imagined what constant danger and fear the poor defenceless Christian villagers are in.

The town of Bashkala, in which I easily obtained fresh horses, is prettily perched in a secure position, on the side of a high range of mountains which overlook an extensive valley. We crossed these the day following my arrival in that place. They are known as the Chugh range, and the steep and sometimes dangerous pass over them ascends to a height of over nine thousand feet above sea level. It was a difficult climb for the poor horses, and bitterly cold in the snowy defiles near the summit. Although winter had not commenced, the snow was nearly a foot in depth. In descending, we passed along a narrow ledge close to a precipice, which must be an extremely hazardous place in the avalanche season. We were glad to reach a lower level again.

Travelling in Turkey should not be undertaken for either pleasure or comfort. During the afternoon our load horse stuck in a bog, from which it was with difficulty extricated, and at Khoshab, where we stayed for the night, the only accommodation I could obtain was that afforded by what appeared to be a combination of barber and tea shop. In addition to carrying on, inside it, these rather incongruous trades, the owner lived and slept in it, there being no second apartment to serve as bedroom.

Seated on the divan which ran along one side, I waited in vain for the man to close his shop. Apparently my presence was attracting customers, and as long as I sat

there he would keep it open. I therefore retired to rest under the gaze of the customers, as best I could, but some hours elapsed ere the room was darkened sufficiently to allow of sleep. Then I discovered that the enterprising shopkeeper had utilized one of his cupboards as a fowl-house, the feathered inmates of which gave vent, throughout the night, to their anticipations of sunrise. Khoshab is a picturesque place, prettily situated at the base of a precipitous rock which is surmounted by a ruined castle, and, being a natural fortress, has evidently been the scene of many conflicts.

On the evening of the day on which I left it, the town of Van came into sight, and, as I descended the mountains towards the place where its houses could be seen scattered over an extensive plain, it was with the prayer that the work I was about to commence might be of some benefit to the many Armenians residing within its precincts.

Ere giving an account of my experiences in this town, I give a chapter describing life in the villages. The events recorded did not happen in this district, but it would be unwise to insert the chapter, in its right sequence, lest trouble might thereby be occasioned to its inhabitants.

CHAPTER V

THE ACTUAL CONDITION

“**P**ARRK AHSDOODZO!” exclaimed the simple-minded inhabitants of a certain village as they crowded around me on my arrival in their little settlement.

Fortunately my zabtieh was not near at the time. Had he or any other Moslem been present they would have feared to thus give expression to their feeling, or to give any welcome to a foreigner.

“Parrk Ahsdoodzo!”—“Thanks be unto God!”—they repeated with signs of evident satisfaction, their devout and sincere gratitude written unmistakably on their faces.

“At last our prayers have been answered,” they explained, as they noticed my surprise at their looks of joy.

“What prayers do you refer to, and how have they been answered?” I ventured to enquire.

“At last the English Government has sent someone to enquire into our oppressions,” they replied; thinking apparently that I was travelling for political reasons.

Probably no British subject had ever spent a night in this village before, and it was natural therefore when one did arrive that the people living in it, having spent long years in praying that England might deliver them, should immediately jump to the conclusion that he had been sent by the British Government to find out whether the

Sultan was fulfilling the obligations entered into for the introduction of reforms.

"No," I answered. "I have not been sent here to enquire into your condition. I am only a preacher travelling from one mission station to another who wishes to spend a night at your village."

At this announcement their faces fell, and their gladness gave way to a look of disappointed hope.

"But," I continued, "if you would like to hear tidings of better things, and will gather together in your church, I will be very glad to speak to you."

They courteously thank me and say that they would much like to have such a service, but explain that were they to do as suggested, or were they to listen to an Englishman speaking, even inside a church, they would run a great risk of being terribly punished afterwards, and for this reason it is impossible to do as desired.

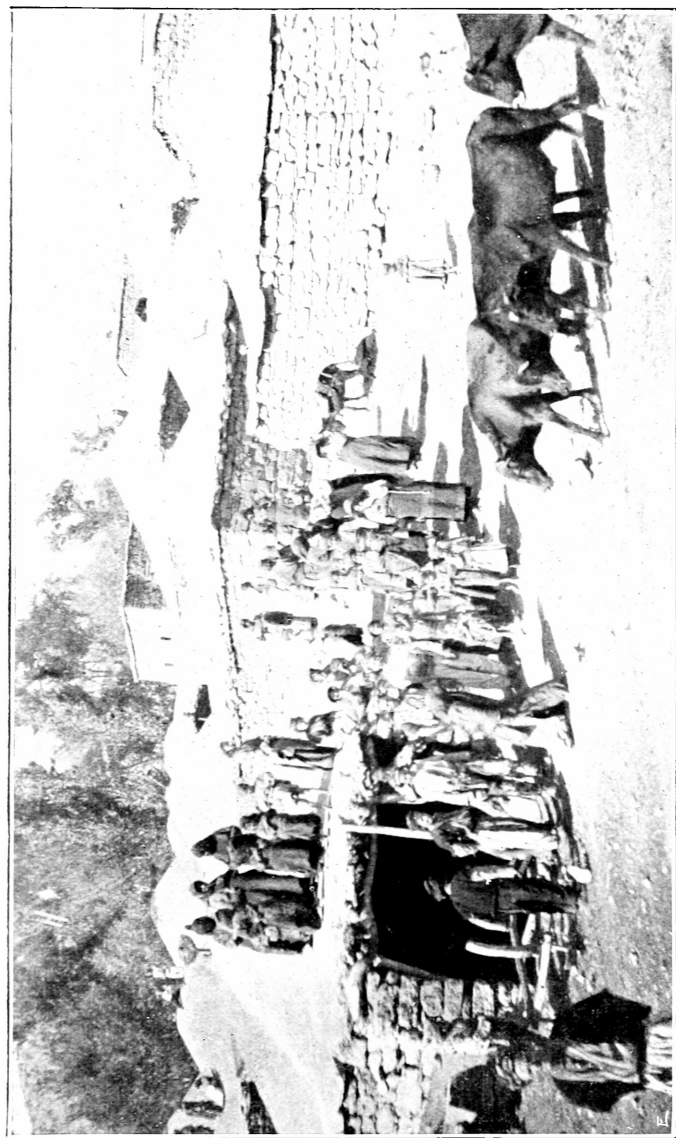
This conversation is one of many that might be cited in which the simple piety of these poor peasants is an outstanding feature. To them, atheism, and all the more recent forms of fashionable religion, are practically unknown; and, though their belief in the Redeemer of mankind is apt to be somewhat hazy because shrouded in ignorance and superstition, they are for the most part content with the faith of their fathers and sincere and reverent in their adherence to it.

Every Armenian is a church member. When about eight days old the children of all of those who have not become Protestants are taken to the Gregorian Church and immersed three times in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, after which they receive the wafer and wine of the Sacrament. Consecrated in this manner almost immediately after birth, they are from earliest infancy surrounded by religious influences, and growing up in an atmosphere of intense reverence for holy things, it is extremely difficult for them to under-

stand the condition of religious life in England or America. They imagine that because of their much greater freedom the people in these countries must necessarily in a very large measure exceed them in piety and devotion, and it is an intense shock to many of them to be told that less than one-eighth of the population of London are church members. The minds of some are quite unable to grasp how such a state of things can possibly exist in a Christian land which has religious liberty.

The presence of Mahommedans and the clearness with which the line of demarkation between them and their Christian subjects is drawn has naturally helped to give a distinctive stamp to every adherent of the Cross, and to make those of limited experience imagine that all other Christians are similarly as pronounced in their profession of faith.

The fact that they regard Western nations as living up to a high profession of Christianity renders it far more difficult for them to understand their apparent apathy and indifference to the sufferings of Armenians; consequently when, after the conversation referred to at the commencement of this chapter, the villagers asked me for some explanation of the fact that my nation had left them to die, I was at a loss what to say: for in any case, even supposing I had had a sufficient reason, it would have been necessary to get their minds to grasp the great difference, in its relation to national life, between their Christianity and that of Great Britain. On this particular occasion, having got rid of my zabtieh for a time—a task not accomplished without extreme difficulty—I entered the stable where I was to pass the night, and decided to enquire as to what foundation these people had for talking of oppression, probing all the statements as far as possible in order to ascertain their truthfulness, obtaining names of places and people referred to when-



A TYPICAL ARMENIAN VILLAGE IN TURKEY.

ever that was possible, and afterwards making notes of what I heard. For, although my business was not of a political nature and I had not set out with the intention of doing such work, I was prevented, as has already been shown, from preaching to the people, and thus fulfilling my vocation. Therefore, as the Turks had created such conditions as hindered my work, I considered it only right to take note of them.

Spreading a rug on a low divan built of mud bricks, which is the best seat that the stable affords, I sit down, whilst the villagers again crowd around me and express their gratitude to God for having sent me to visit them. We are in a large apartment, and across half of it a railing has been constructed to prevent the animals from mixing themselves with the human occupants. There are no windows—one or two holes let in a little air and light—so that, although it is not yet evening, there are dark shadows in the stable. These are, however, soon dispelled in part by the bright glow of the fire which a native is busily engaged in kindling on the hearth. In the absence of paper it is started with some of the dried-up shrubs of gum tragacanth with which nature has abundantly supplied these parts. These burn readily, and when well alight, native fuel—which burns like peat, and is composed of earth and refuse mixed together and dried in the sun—is heaped on top.

After seeing the fire safely kindled, and making sure that at least half of the smoke is finding its way up the chimney, I turn to the group of Armenians who have entered the stable, some of whom are crouching or seated on the earthen floor, whilst others stand behind them.

“Well, what are your oppressions?” I venture to enquire.

“Where can we begin to tell such a long story?” is the exclamation which escapes from one or two, but after

a short pause a bright and intelligent young man, pointing to the roof of the stable, says :—

“ Do you see those rafters up there ? ”

“ Yes,” I answer, as I look at the large circular timbers which run across below the wattled ceiling of our refuge.

“ Those are the rafters to which the Turks tied our women by the arms and legs in order to beat them.”

“ That is very horrible. Did it happen recently ? ”

“ Not very long ago.”*

“ What else did they do ? ”

“ On that seat where you are sitting a Turkish officer once sat. Accompanied by several others, he came on a certain day to our village, and stayed for nearly a week abusing the people and holding an inquisition for the purpose of extorting money. By his order many of our young men were tied by the hands, then made to lie on the ground and beaten until they were covered with blood.”

“ Did he do anything else ? ”

“ He did many things which we are ashamed to speak of.”

“ But I would like to know.”

“ We had at that time a school teacher here. His wife and daughters were brought to this stable and abused by that officer.”

“ Were any other women ill-treated at the same time ? ”

“ Yes, many.”

“ In what way ? ”

“ We cannot tell of such things.”

“ Tell me then of one occurrence only.”

Having thus brought pressure to bear upon them, they give me particulars of how some of the women of the village, after being brought to the stable, suffered tortures which I cannot describe. They are so revolting that I can listen to no more, and in order to prevent further

* This has happened again during the present year, at Moosh.

recitals set about the preparation of my evening meal. I find that my food box is almost empty, so ask whether they can supply me with any meat. They have none, so I say that I would like to purchase a chicken, these birds being very plentiful in Turkey. But a chicken cannot be obtained anywhere in the village, as the soldiers have killed and eaten all available ones. "Can they let me have an egg?" I enquire, but am answered by a shake of the head. New-laid eggs can often be obtained in Asia Minor or Armenia at the rate of eight for one penny, yet these peasants are so reduced by oppression and over-taxation that they cannot supply even one of those useful commodities.

"What can you give me to eat?" I ask.

"Perhaps we can get you a little bread, but we have not much to spare."

"Have you no other food of any description in the village?"

"None at all, excepting a little cheese which one of our number has buried under the ground."

"Then please try and obtain some for me."

The man who has been sent for this presently returns with a small piece of white cheese of excellent flavour. It is cream cheese, which has had the moisture beaten out of it in order to make it keep. Having consumed it I ask for more to be brought, but am told that it is impossible to obtain a further supply. The resources of the village being exhausted, I gather together the few scraps of food which I happen to have with me, and sit on the bench to partake of them, an up-turned box doing duty as a table. During my repast some of the Armenians courteously retire, whilst others remain grouped in the dark shadows of the stable conversing with one another in subdued tones, a wick hanging from a bowl of oil giving a dim glimmer of light around the particular post to which is affixed the ledge on which it stands, whilst the

sounds of animals munching their food tell that the horses are being cared for.

As I finish my meal the villagers approach again and seat themselves on the ground in front of me, others standing in a semicircle at the back.

As, in the dim twilight, I gaze into the sorrowful faces of these my suffering fellow men and fellow Christians, whose need for long years, pent up and unvoiced, has cried in bitter anguish for redress, is it remarkable that a strange pity should sweep across my soul, or that I should be filled with an intense desire to help these people? There are a few hard faces amongst them, those of men who have been driven by long-continued intolerance and tyranny to harbour animosity against their oppressors, an enmity which is, however, characterised by hopeless despair. Do you wonder at it? But the majority are sober, thoughtful, and grave, with looks on their sad wistful features which betoken reverence, piety, and submission. Some are clad in the merest rags, and all have that frightened, hunted expression which is born of long association with the Turk. "Poor people," I think, as huddled together on the floor they begin to reiterate their woes, "it is strange that you should have to suffer so much for the sake of our common Lord and Master, whilst I, your fellow Christian, the subject of a nation which has unintentionally been in some measure responsible for not preventing your sorrow, am permitted to sit amongst you free from the burdens which you have to bear. If each nation were punished for its own guilt, then perhaps I and other European Christians would have been called upon to pass through the fiery trial that you are enduring. But not only am I precluded from that, I am kept whenever possible from looking upon your agonies, a mark has been set upon me, I am an Englishman, I am shielded, guarded, and protected, everything is done to ensure my safety, yet gathered around

me are some of the abused and trampled-down people for the amelioration of whose condition my nation made herself responsible."

I feel guilty as I look at this medley of human woe, these sad faces and spoilt disheartened lives, crushed with relentless fury between the iron millstones of Turkish tyranny and Koordish cruelty, and then flung up against me by some dispensation of Providence, their grim faces speaking to me of their woe. Why should I be the one selected to bear the brunt of it all? is the thought that passes through my mind, as once more I am made the scapegoat on which are poured their piteous tales of horror.

How ashamed I feel! I almost wish that the ground might open and swallow me that I might escape from the hideous reproach of looking at these victims of the Turks' unspeakable cruelty and the neglect of Western nations.

Now they are speaking of what the Turks have done. Listen! "They came from —— to the village of —— and bound two hundred men, then they brought the wife of one of these men to where they were and abused her in front of them, whilst the soldiers dishonoured the others in the village."

They pass on and tell of Koordish trouble. One of them relates how a fellow-worker of his was caught by the Koords. They kindled a fire, stripped him naked, then made an iron stick red hot and said, "Now, if you do not pay the sum we demand, we will beat you to death with this." He was obliged to pay the full amount asked.

"Last autumn," says another, "when we were harvesting, some Koords came to the village. A shirt belonging to one of them was stolen by another Koord and hidden away. Three Armenians were accused of the theft and forced to pay an indemnity of three hundred

piastres.* In this case the Government took the matter up, and the delinquent was sentenced to imprisonment. The whole trial, however, proved to be a farce, as the sentence was never carried out, and the authorities instead of putting the man under arrest gave him the office of tribute gatherer."

A young man tells of some Armenians, who, according to custom, went, at the time of the Bairam festivities, to pay tribute to a Koordish Bey. Whilst they were there, the son of this Chief, a man of about thirty-five years of age, entered the room, and without saluting them said, "I have a dog (an animal abhorred by them) but I love my dog more than the Armenians." He then showed them three hundred bullets, and said, "I have another three hundred in addition to these, and I have sworn by my wife and by God (said to be the most solemn oath with a Koord) to shoot each one into an Armenian, and not to shoot one in vain."

"I knew a fine old Armenian," says another, as the darkness deepens around us, "a good and saintly man, who lived in the village of H——. Last year he was sitting in his house nursing his little grandson, when a Moslem, who was in the neighbourhood, without giving any reason, fired in at the open window and shot him through the head."

After mentioning that their village is plundered every summer by these lawless brigands, they speak of the tribute which they are obliged to pay to the Turks. The whole settlement contains only about one hundred houses, but during one year they have paid in tribute, one hundred and thirty thousand piastres, a sum equal to about eleven hundred and eighty-one English pounds. "Some of our taxes are charged many times over," they say.

* One piastre is equal to about twopence farthing of English money.

"What happens if you refuse to pay," I ask.

"In that case the zabtiehs pay them for us," they reply.

I express surprise at this generosity on the part of the Turks, and am then informed that such payment is regarded by the zabtiehs as a loan to the person on whose behalf it is made, and interest at the rate of fifteen per cent. per month charged on it. Thus the burden of the villager is only increased by the advance made. When its payment falls due the zabtieh again comes and demands his money with interest. Should the poor villager be unable to pay, an equivalent, and sometimes much more than an equivalent, is forced from him. What cannot be paid by purse has to be paid by person, and should the unfortunate victim of over-taxation be unlucky enough to have a daughter she will be demanded as the zabtieh's "white slave" either for a time or permanently. If there are no women in the house who take the fancy of the tax collector, then he must content himself by taking the wooden doors of the house, or anything else he can lay his hands on.

As the shades of evening fall, and these Armenians sit around me in the silent, semi-darkness of the stable, I seek to comfort them in their sorrows by speaking to them of the things of God, and of that glorious hope beyond the grave which is theirs who in this life "suffer for His sake," for amidst the tempest of tyrannical oppression which beats against them, this hope is their only beacon light of comfort, the solitary solace of their sad surroundings, the only brilliant amidst their many tears. The priest who usually ministers to the needs of these villagers has been in prison for years "under suspicion," nothing having been proved against him, and considering that they have thus been left without any to shepherd them, it is somewhat surprising that they should still remain so true to the Saviour in whom they trust,

and willing to endure so much rather than deny His name. As I speak to them of the Bible, they tell me that they are not allowed to read it, and if the Moslems know they are doing so they demand the book and destroy it.

"Have you no copies at all, then?" I enquire.

"Yes, we have a few Bibles, but they are buried; we can only dig them up and read them when there are no Turks or Koords in the village."

As I go on speaking to them I hope that they do not think me a hypocrite, I hope they realize that I am only a unit in the Christianity of the Western world, which is partly responsible for these things—these buried Bibles and forlorn lives—and that I alone have not power to alter their condition. Some of them have lost their wives or their children, others probably have had their daughters dishonoured, and all or much of this might have been prevented had the Christian nations acted differently. Do they think I am mocking them, as I, who am myself protected, look upon their sufferings and then tell them to trust in God? I think not; at any rate they are too polite to show it, for, as they listen intently, appreciation is written on some of their faces.

Before I have had time to say very much a sudden interruption occurs. The door of the stable is flung wide open and my zabtieh strides in. At his appearance the majority of my poor, cowed fellow-Christians melt away like chaff before the wind. Those who remain begin to oppose and criticise what I have been saying, then one by one they gradually slip out into the darkness of the night, and I am left alone with my Moslem protector. I afterwards receive a private message, explaining that their opposition was only a necessary subterfuge, to save themselves from trouble after my departure; they really believed all I said, but they dared not let the Turks think so.

The zabtieh spreads his coat on the floor and goes

through the gymnastics of a Mussulman's prayer, standing, kneeling, bowing, the fire burns low on the earth, the oil lamp flickers dimly, and as I prepare to retire to rest I think of the old story of Cain and Abel. It seems to be repeated again that night :

"And Abel was a keeper of sheep . . . and Cain talked with Abel his brother, and it came to pass when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain lest any finding him should kill him."

The innocent one suffered, and Cain, the guilty one, was protected.

I have had a mark set upon me, the mark of being a British subject, and a Turkish zabtieh guards my bed all night lest any finding me should kill me, yet whilst I am watched over and protected in the little mud stable, outside it in the village, yea, probably from inside it also, the voice of my brother's blood crieth to God from the ground, and my suffering brethren, many of whom doubtless have had relatives slain, have sadly gone to their homes to tell their wives and little children that the traveller who has arrived in the village has not after all been sent by the Government of England, he is only a "bodvillie," a preacher.

I spread a carpet on the brick-built divan, pull my rugs over me, and calling to the zabtieh tell him to extinguish the light. I try to go to sleep, but there seems to be a figure standing at my bedside endeavouring to attract my attention to a pool of blood and saying as it points to it, "This is your brother's blood." Then beetles come out from their hiding places amongst the bricks, and begin to crawl over me, making sleep yet more difficult. I think of the villagers sleeping in the surrounding houses, whose relatives have been slain, whose hearts have been torn with anguish, who have had their homes wrecked and their women dishonoured, and wonder at their meekness

in not trying to revenge themselves on one who represents a nation that they might rightly blame. At last I fall into a troubled sleep. I awake with a start. The stable is pitch dark, the zabtieh, a little distance away, is snoring heavily, otherwise all is silent, but I can feel something moving close beside the bed. It touches one of my legs; is it, I wonder, some Armenian who has stolen in at dead of night to execute vengeance on the representative of that Power which has failed to fulfil its duty. Is the nearest approach to Cain, in this modern tragedy, at last to expiate his offence and meet his doom? Meanwhile I feel another touch from my midnight visitor who appears to be stealthily moving towards my head. I give a shout in order to waken the zabtieh, there is a loud clatter of hoofs on the stable floor, and I realize that the cause of the disturbance is only one of the donkeys which has wandered round the barrier from the other side of the stable. So, after all, I am to be spared to tell the tale.

When morning comes, hoping that the few hens left in the village have been industrious during the early hours, I venture to ask for an egg. I am told that there are none to spare. My zabtieh, on hearing this, offers to procure one for me, but fearing he will use force in order to obtain it, and knowing that he will not pay for it, I ask him not to trouble, and try and make him believe I am happier without it, and content myself with eating dry native bread for breakfast.

This repast being over, and the loads not yet ready for starting, I decide to take a walk round the village and, if possible, have a look at the interiors of one or two of the houses to see if everything is the same as it has been represented. On turning round, I find the eternal zabtieh is following; it is impossible to escape his attentions as he tracks me first down one lane, then another. My purpose is foiled, for with him watching

me I dare not enter any house lest the occupants should be punished after my departure. I look in at one or two through the open door. They are the merest hovels, devoid of furniture, and with their mud floors uncarpeted and bare. I walk to the outskirts of the little settlement, and look out over the great expansive plain, sad at heart in thinking that England does not know, persuading myself that if she knew of the suffering of that one village alone, which is only one of hundreds that are in similar plight, she would do something. Whilst I am musing thus, my zabtieh approaches and, not dreaming that I know the real condition of things, says, with a smiling face as he points towards it :

“ This is a very good village, effendi.”

“ Yes,” I reply, wondering whether he will detect any irony in my tones, for I do not mean it in the sense that he does, “ it is a very good village.”

CHAPTER VI

LIFE IN A TURKISH TOWN

LOOK at those! How were all those houses burnt down?"

"From time of massacre that is so," was the answer I received in broken English.

"But did they burn the houses as well?"

"Yes, many houses they burnt."

"Look at this splendid building; what a pity it has been destroyed!"

"Excuse me to say, Mr. Campbell, but it is better we do not stop here to look."

"Why not?"

"I afraid from Turks, they may see us."

"Well, I don't mind if they do."

"If they see we look at such things, maybe they think we are revolutionist, and make trouble for us."

"Let them think what they like; surely I can stop if I wish to do so?"

"Indeed Mr. Campbell, but perhaps also they make trouble for me after you are gone."

"Then perhaps we had better walk on."

The one with whom I was conversing—as we made our way through the suburbs of the town of Van towards the walled city—was a well-educated Armenian, in whose statements I had found that I could place the fullest confidence, and, as we went on, past the charred remains of buildings which had once formed the homes of wealthy

Armenians, sometimes walking in the shade of tall and slender poplar trees, and occasionally emerging into the full, fierce blaze of the afternoon sun, whose rays seemed to be reflected back with intensified heat from the fine white dust on which we trod, I could not help wondering how far it was consistent with that liberty which courtesy, not to mention prestige, is supposed to ensure to a British subject in a foreign land, that one of such nationality should be unable to stop in the street and look at the gutted and charred remains of once magnificent mansions, without the fear of getting himself or his native friends into trouble.

I was, however, in the shadow of the Crescent, and this proved to be only one of many days lived under the constant curse of having one's liberties curtailed by the dread of bringing disaster either upon some innocent Armenian, or oneself—of having to watch every action lest it might be misconstrued by watchful Moslems—of being obliged to refrain in certain places from friendship and converse with the Christians, lest they be punished afterwards for having had dealings with a foreigner—in short, of living in an atmosphere of suspicion demanding such care in every action as to make life little better than imprisonment.

The walled town of Van is built at the base of a large rock (see frontispiece), which, rising abruptly, near the centre of a large plain, to a height of three hundred feet, and said to resemble, in shape, a camel lying down, is famous for its inscriptions. One of the first explorers to make copies of them was murdered by the Koords, and—although his records were preserved, and have since been confirmed and enhanced by others—it is only within recent years that the Vannic language, in which many of them are inscribed, has been understood. These engravings, with others found in the neighbourhood, date back to many centuries before Christ, and give in-



A STREET IN A TURKISH TOWN.

Armenian already referred to, I was surprised at the bustling activity of its very narrow streets, which, as being typical of those in other Turkish towns, are worthy of a little description. They were crowded with men in curious costumes, who flock from the countryside for the sale and purchase of goods. Some wore the bowl-shaped hat of the villager, made out of brown felt, but the majority were covered by the ubiquitous fez, the wearing of which is essential to the safety of Christians, for, if they don a European hat, they are apt to be arrested as revolutionists. A few of the men we passed had a turban wound round the fez, but this custom is dying out.

As we walked through the streets, droves of donkeys were encountered, whilst horses entering the town, laden with merchandise, compelled us, at times, to stand aside and make way for them. Soldiers were to be seen strolling about on the look out for the latest news, which, in the absence of reliable and regular papers, must be gained by word of mouth; and caravans, as they left the city, flung back upon it their last farewell in the tinkle of the bells which were fixed to their leaders.

Many shops and open sheds were passed, where a great variety of things were on sale, the vendor either standing behind a counter or squatting cross-legged, on a seat beside his wares in Oriental style. I found later on that most European goods were obtainable, the notable exceptions being such things as chocolate, cocoa, mustard, etc., and had no difficulty either in purchasing English biscuits, or in getting clothes made in European style.

Quite a large number of Armenians, who are workers in silver, are very clever at filagree work; others are saddlers, weavers, bootmakers, copper and wood workers, the latter, in the absence of a proper lathe, turning their chair and table legs with a bow, the string of which is wound round the article which requires turning. The

lathe tool is held with the foot and the turning done by hand, the reverse of the methods adopted by Western nations. Another instance where Oriental and Occidental customs are opposed to one another is in the sawing of wood, in which the board is often held with the foot, and the saw used set to cut on the pull, instead of on the drive.

After wandering through the streets of this ancient city, I went with my companion to visit one of the largest of the Gregorian churches. It was a spacious building, capable of holding some thousands of people. Turkish events leave their shadows behind, and, as we stood beneath its roof, an Armenian who was present recounted an experience he had had within it eight years previously, when, as a fugitive from Moslem cruelty, he had sought refuge there.

"It was the time of the massacre, and all of us expected to be killed that day. We had no arms with which to defend ourselves, and, with many others, I came here to wait for death. The church soon filled with people, and I was pushed farther and farther back until I found myself within the altar rails. In this position I could obtain a good view of the dense crowd of helpless and unarmed men, women, and children, with which the church was packed to its doors. Rich and poor mingled in a confused mass, waiting for the worst, and praying that they might be kept faithful until death, and that this release, when it came, might be a speedy one. Then some Turks came, and I closed my eyes in prayer, hoping that I might not see what was to follow.

Just then, when the butchery was about to commence, there was a commotion at the door. The British Consul had arrived. Placing himself between the Turks and the thousands of helpless Armenians, he kept the former from attacking, and marched all the Christians up to the American mission station, on which the British flag was flying."

When this story was ended, I left the church, feeling thankful that there had been times, such as the one described, when my nation had been able to step in and save these people from the sword of Islam.

A few days later, having grown tired of the atmosphere of suspicion which hung like a pall over everything in the town, and with an instance of which this chapter opens, I proposed a walk in the country. In company with one or two Armenians, I left the city and followed a road which ran across an extensive plain to a Christian village situated on the side of a mountain.

After walking for half an hour I found myself right away from the houses, where I could feel free to look about without having motives misconstrued and without running the risk of causing trouble to some innocent native. Soon I saw in the distance a poorly dressed woman approaching, and, turning to one of the natives with me, enquired :

"Is that an Armenian woman coming towards us?" to which I received an affirmative answer.

"Hullo! she has disappeared; where has she gone?" I presently asked.

"She runs across the field till we are passed by," he responded in broken English.

"What for?"

"She thinks by our clothings we are Turks, and fears to meet together with us on the road, lest there become some injury to her."

At first I was inclined to doubt the accuracy of this statement, though that the woman was in fear was evident by the haste with which she scurried away over the plain like a frightened hare. I watched closely, however, and saw that when she perceived we were making no attempt to follow, she stopped, and as soon as we had passed, slowly made her way back to the road. I felt inclined to go after this terrified villager and reassure her by telling

her that we were not Turks, and was only restrained from doing so by the fear that, as soon as I approached, she might take fright and run off again.

This incident happened in open daylight and within sight of the houses of the town. The continual state of fear in which these Christian villagers live is indicated by the action of this poor woman, who, every time she goes to town, must, if Moslems are on the road, go half a mile out of her way and wait until they have safely passed ere she dare venture to continue her journey.

Later, when we were seated by the roadside, on a knoll of rising ground, I saw two men coming towards us across the plain.

"Are these Armenians?" I asked, turning to the native with whom I had previously conversed.

"Yes," he replied.

"Then let us salute them," I said, "and enquire whether they understand the way of salvation."

"I think they will not understand to such question," he answered.

"Why not?"

"They will think we mean salvation of nation for always, eyes of Armenians are to this thing."

It was perfectly true. The Armenians need salvation from conditions which make it extremely difficult for them to live a Christian life, and their minds naturally turn to political conditions when any mention is made of salvation.

One cannot live very long in a Turkish town without being struck by the fact that a large proportion of the Turks are wearing uniform which denotes some official connection with the Government, either as postman, policeman, soldier, or zabtieh; and, if clerks and secretaries are included, the number of men in the employ of the authorities cannot be less than one-half of the total number of the adult male Moslem population,

Of the remainder, the majority are idlers, as very few Turks engage in either agricultural, mercantile, or manufacturing pursuits. A few do some work as saddlers, grocers, or gardeners, and almost all have relatives who are in some way or other connected with the Government; thus almost the entire Moslem population have a more or less direct financial interest to uphold by supporting it, whilst practically powerless to alter its constitution. Therefore, even if they themselves were against a massacre, they would feel obliged to carry it out, if ordered to do so by Constantinople.

For the purposes of state, Turkey is divided into provinces known as vilayets, over which an official, called a Vali, is placed, who is directly responsible to Constantinople for all that occurs within the sphere of his jurisdiction. These provinces are usually sub-divided into areas known as sanjaks, each of which is in charge of a mutaserif who is responsible to the Vali. The sanjaks are split into smaller districts under kymerkums, and known as kymerkumluk; these areas are again partitioned into mudirluk, under an official known as a mudir; and each village has its own head man.

The manner in which officials discharge their duties naturally varies a great deal in different localities. Many of them, like the Vali I met on board the steamer, have an intense hatred of Christians, whom they regard as their legitimate prey, and, though they speak of them as dogs, do not treat them with as much consideration as is usually accorded to those useful animals. There are others who desire to govern with fairness and equity and to institute reform, but the unfortunate thing is, that one who seeks this has generally much more to contend with, and is more liable to be dismissed from his post, than one who, by oppression and injustice, makes life intolerable for the Christians in his district.

Should an official show a tendency for the adoption of

enlightened views, and putting into practice schemes for the amelioration of the condition of Armenians, this spirit is apt to be regarded as a sign of revolt against the existing *régime*, with the result that he is deposed to a lower position or transferred to some out of the way mountain district where he is practically in exile. I met one such, in a dangerous little town which is the constant scene of Koordish raids, and he told me, I believe sincerely, that his personal desire was to rule his district in accord with the principles of liberty and justice; but that, were he to do so, he would at once incur the displeasure of his superiors and be in danger of losing office. In another town I heard of a kymerkum having been imprisoned as a result of his endeavours to better the condition of the Armenians and alleviate their sufferings.

Some officials are identified with what is known as the young Turkish party, an association, and probably also an organized society of Turks, who desire to see the laws of their country enforced, bribery and corruption discouraged, and the land well and properly governed. But Constantinople is the bugbear that sits on the back of every Turkish official with a bloody dagger of violence and oppression, which, should he object to it being too freely used on the Christians in his district, may be plunged into his own side.

The majority, therefore, of those who would like to see better conditions, very naturally adopt the time-serving policy of getting all the personal advantage and gain that is possible out of their office, thus acting out the Osmanli proverb—"The egg of to-day is better than the fowl of to-morrow." This necessarily means the hard and merciless grinding down, by unjust measures and over-taxation, of the common people, especially of the Christians; a condition of things which is likely to continue so long as the persecution and oppression of the latter by an official is regarded by Constantinople as a token of allegiance to

its authority. That the principle on which they act of "killing the goose that lays the golden eggs" is a short-sighted one, calculated to ultimately undermine in a serious manner the prosperity of the empire, must be apparent to all who pursue it; but it is a case of "every man for himself," and each official, realising the uncertainty of his tenure of office, seeks to raise as large a revenue as possible whilst he is in power, the burden of this policy always falling most heavily on the Christian population.

Even a Vali is not free to do as he pleases in the matter of instituting better government, but is largely in the hands of his underlings, many of whom may be dependent for their sustenance upon bribes and extortion, and who will at once try to oust him from office if he sweeps with too clean a broom. In addition there appears to be an elaborate system of *espionage* on officials by which their doings are reported regularly at headquarters.

Hampered and hemmed in with a religion which advocates intolerance and a Government which encourages them to enforce, by extreme measures, the fanaticism which their faith engenders, the wonder is that there should be any officials at all who look with some small degree of sympathy upon the sufferings of the Christians, and who seek to secure for them a measure of justice and equity.

In company with Dr. Raynolds, one of the American missionaries, I called upon the Vali of Van. It is the custom, before paying a visit, to send a messenger to announce your coming, and soon after this man had been dispatched we prepared to start. As the Turks do not wear boots in their houses, we, in order to avoid the rather undignified task of removing ours from our feet outside the Pasha's door, put over them rubber goloshes.

Upon arriving at the house, we cross the courtyard and are shown up a flight of stairs; then, after renouncing

our supplementary footgear, we enter the reception room, a large well-lighted apartment with a divan running along either side, having small tables placed close by at regular intervals—there is a glass-fronted bookcase at one end, and a few chairs go to make up the rest of the furniture and to give the room a European appearance, an impression to which an Eastern touch is lent by the fine Oriental rugs with which the floor is covered.

After we have waited a few minutes the Vali enters, a rather stout man with fresh complexion and grey beard. We salute him; mutual enquiries are made as to health, then a servant enters, hands us cigarettes—which we decline, explaining that we do not “draw”—and serves us with coffee, a concoction very different from the beverage usually described by that name. The cups are of the size generally seen among children’s playthings, and the mixture within so thick and full of grouts, that only about half of it is drinkable. Some time having been spent in conversation, we ask to be excused, and say farewell.

The employment of numberless officials is no criterion of the wealth of the Sublime Porte. The pay that many soldiers receive from the Government for their services is almost nil. A Vali, and those officials directly under him, should derive their income from the revenues of the vilayet in which they exercise their authority; but in vilayets such as Van, where the Christians have been, and are being, fast exterminated by persecution and ill-treatment, the revenues have during recent years fallen so low as to be inadequate to meet the very considerable demands made upon them for these salaries. The regular payment of soldiers is merely a pretence; they may be given a little at any great festival such as the Bairam feast, but even this is uncertain.

The zabtiehs are not much better off, though it is possible for them to earn a little by escorting travellers;

for, although the Government is supposed to supply them to Europeans free of charge, it is a recognised rule to pay them at the rate of about three or four shillings a day, besides feeding their horses. A Moslem can usually obtain the protection of a zabtieh when travelling; a Christian native cannot, except he be a person of great importance and influence, in which case he can do so by paying well for the privilege.

One cold, wintry night, during my stay in Van, an exciting incident occurred, close to the mission station, which well illustrates the methods of officials. Most of the Armenians in the district had retired to bed, and the snow-covered streets were deserted; for the fear of arrest if discovered in them at night prevents the Christians from making late calls, and lack of adequate light drives people to seek repose early.

The stillness which told of a sleeping city was broken occasionally by the baying of the wolves, who made nightly excursions into "The Gardens," and who generally succeeded, on each visit, in despatching one or two of the many dogs.

As I retired to rest on this particular night, I little thought that in a neighbouring house a meeting of Armenians, who are known as revolutionists, was to be held, at which they had arranged to meet one of their leaders, recently arrived from Russia.

This, however, proved to be the case, and the following story of what happened during that night, and which I afterwards heard, shows something of the relation between the officials and the revolutionists. That the latter exist in Asiatic Turkey there can be no doubt. They are an organized body of Armenians, whose leaders are very often the naturalized subjects of other countries, and can therefore claim justice if wrongly imprisoned, but they represent a very small proportion of the community, and for this reason I have hesitated somewhat

before recording the incident I am about to relate, for whilst I desire to give a true representation of all that occurs in a Turkish town, it is an exceptional occurrence, and might give the impression that the Armenians were, as a whole, a race of fierce and lawless, well-armed bandits, whereas they are actually the very reverse of this; the majority are submissive, meek, patient, and forbearing, and as none are allowed to carry firearms or weapons of any description, they are entirely at the mercy of any Koords or Turks with whom they come into contact.

Many have blamed the revolutionists as having been the indirect cause of the massacres, but that this is unfair is proved by the fact that, previous to these outbreaks no overt act of hostility to the Turkish Government on their part, and no refusal to pay taxes had occurred. The most they had done was to express their desire for improved conditions. Nothing had been done, either collectively or separately, to justify more than the arrest of perhaps two or three individuals.

When, however, I have pointed out to Armenians that the presence of the revolutionary faction tended to increase the likelihood of massacre, and should therefore be discouraged, I have almost invariably received the following reply, which is full of pathos and significance. "Our only hope in life is that England or the Powers may help us, but they do not notice us until some of our number are massacred; it is better, therefore that some should die in the hope of saving the others, and if the Powers are never going to help us, it is better that we should all die, for death is preferable to life when lived under its present conditions."

The more I got to know the actual condition of life in Armenia the more I realised that this reply contained an unanswerable argument.

The missionaries show no sympathy whatever to the revolutionists, and have always discouraged their work.

At the same time the enlightenment which results from the teaching and the education they give must naturally, by developing the manliness and widening the visions of the Armenians, cause them to desire to throw off a yoke which hinders all progress.

On this particular night, as soon as all is quiet, and the revolutionists have assembled, the meeting commences, the discussions being carried on at this midnight hour without fear of molestation or disturbance, the feeling of security being increased by the knowledge that the gathering, having been arranged among themselves, none of the Turks will know of it.

Whilst, however, they are busy conversing over schemes for the betterment of their condition, another Armenian, with treacherous intentions, is picking his way through the lonely streets towards the broad road that leads to the city. For fifteen liras the traitor has agreed to lead some Turkish soldiers to the place where the meeting is being held. He meets them, and soon their tramping has brought them to the neighbourhood of the house where the few Armenians, all unconscious of danger, are discussing their plans of reform.

The soldiers evidently prefer to attack from a safe distance, for, instead of attempting to enter the house and make the men prisoners, they stealthily approach a neighbouring building, clamber on to it, and make their way to a flat roof which overlooks the lighted windows of the room, which has been pointed out to them by the traitor as the one in which the meeting is being held.

At a given signal there is a loud banging as about fifty reports ring out in quick succession on the still night air. To those within the room the sound of breaking glass is followed by the thud of the bullets as, passing through the room, they strike the wall. The apartment is quickly emptied, but the leader has been struck in the knee by a bullet, and as he escapes by a private door and hastens

through the streets to a hiding place, kept in readiness for him, the blood, which is flowing from his wound, leaves a tell-tale colour on the snow.

Meanwhile the sound of the shooting has aroused the sleepers in the neighbourhood, and terrified Armenians, fearing that another massacre has commenced, are peering anxiously out of their windows or preparing for flight ; whilst some of the bolder spirits venture on to their roofs in order to ascertain, if possible, the cause of the firing. The soldiers, afraid to come to close quarters with the revolutionists, some of whom may possibly be armed, yet anxious to uphold their dignity by making some arrests, take advantage of this to capture some of the people on the adjacent roofs, ignoring the facts which point to their innocence. Clad only in their thin night garments they are compelled to march over the snow-covered ground and through the keen piercing cold and frost to a damp and gloomy prison, into which they are cast in a shivering and woe-begone condition. Their cries for mercy or for clothing are alike in vain. One of their relatives, hearing of the trouble and fearing the ill effects on them of cold and exposure, takes to two of them in the morning their clothing, but no sooner does he arrive at the prison and state his errand than he is also arrested and cast into the cell to swell the number of the captives.

With the coming of daylight the soldiers go to examine the room where the meeting has been held, and noticing blood marks, follow them through the snow to the house where the fugitive leader is hiding. He is taken completely by surprise, and the Turks march off in triumph with their captive, who, on examination, they find to be a Russian subject. He is taken before the Vali, a good and just official, who asks him, " How was it that on two previous occasions when I sent my soldiers to capture you, you escaped from them ? "

" The reason," replies the captive, " is that on the first

occasion I gave them twenty-five liras to let me go, and the second time I purchased my release for fifty liras; but it is the possibility of being able to do such things as this that makes us revolutionists. We are not in revolt against the Government, all we want is to obtain such reforms as will ensure the keeping by Turkey of her own laws, and the abandonment of the present system of injustice and bribery."

The man is then put into prison as, being a Russian subject, he must be kept until an opportunity presents itself of sending him to Constantinople for trial. It is difficult to say what happens in these places of confinement; after a few days a rumour is spread that he has died in the prison; then this is contradicted, but so far as is known the man has never yet been sent for trial and is still languishing in the prison at Van.

The sequel of this story occurred a few weeks later, when I had left Van. The man who had betrayed his companions to the Turks was stabbed to death one Sunday afternoon whilst walking through the streets, and, as the authorities could not find the assassin, they arrested about thirty men on suspicion, some of whom were afterwards released.

During the whole of my sojourn in the land of the Sultan the only other occasion on which I received any proof that there were revolutionists in the country was when I received a communication from a man who had been helped by the services I conducted, and who in a letter in which he told of past misdeeds which he had resolved by Divine assistance to abjure, mentioned a former connection with them.

This letter contained so much that might have caused trouble to the man had it got into the hands of the Government, that it became necessary to destroy it at once. The fact that I only became cognizant of their presence on these two occasions will I think serve to show

that they are not by any means either active or numerous, and Consular reports confirm the view that the Armenians, as a nation, whilst groaning beneath their burdens, and anxious for emancipation from the injustice under which they suffer, do not entertain the idea of revolution.

The revolutionist is, however, made the excuse for much of the injustice which takes place. I heard of one case in which the Vali of a province caused numbers of revolutionary papers to be written, and inserted in the pockets of Armenians, in order that he might have an excuse for arresting them.

As I intend later to describe the general social condition of the Christian population, I will now only refer to them as regards their occupations in the towns.

In these, they are mostly employed as merchants and shopkeepers, many working all day at such trades as tailoring, bootmaking, weaving, carpentry, and silver-working. In business they are thrifty, astute, and industrious, a fact which is in a measure responsible for the present existence of the nation, as, were they as indolent as the Turk, who lives largely upon their labour, it is certain that neither nation would to-day possess the vitality which it has.

The part of a Turkish town which is most welcome to a traveller is, however, the mission station, this being in some cities the only place where he can meet with people speaking his own language and living in the manner to which he is accustomed. These are the places where he will find warm human sympathy shedding its softening influence on the hard problems of life under Turkish rule, where men and women are helped, and at which they are instructed in truths which tend to their eternal welfare. As my work necessarily brought me into intimate touch with the many interesting activities of life on a mission station, I give some account of these in the chapter following.

CHAPTER VII

WATER IN A THIRSTY LAND

IN the year 1846, a procession was moving slowly and silently through the "Grand Rue" of Pera. The street was lined with a curious crowd, who gave vent to various ejaculations and remarks, such as: "This is the new sect of the Armenians." "They are a very decent looking set." "No crosses, no candles, no chants." "Sixteen cavasses, the government is going to protect them, anyhow!"

Fifteen years previously the American Board had commenced its work in Turkey by sending missionaries to Constantinople, and this, the first burial from the membership of the much hated and persecuted Church which they had established, awoke great opposition from the adherents of the Gregorian community. The roughs boasted that the body should never be buried. They would seize it when carried to the grave, tie a rope to the feet and drag it through the streets of the city. It was an occasion of great anxiety for the little body of missionaries and "evangelicals" who walked beside the casket.

Fortunately four bodies of Turkish troops were going through their daily drill close to the place of interment, and their presence prevented the intended body-snatching, but as the mourners wended their way back from the burial ground, there suddenly burst upon them from a gorge, a howling and infuriated mob of roughs, number-

ing many hundreds, and hurling stones and brickbats with such blind passion that most of them fell wide of the mark. The sixteen cavasses, with naked scimitars, formed in line to prevent the mob from reaching their prey.

"Keep far apart, brethren," said Dr. Dwight, the missionary. "Give open spaces for the stones; don't run; take good long steps." But soon after he had spoken he was hit with a stone on the left shoulder. One man was knocked down, but picked up and marched along again. Several were struck, but the cavasses who had formed in the rear succeeded in keeping the mob at bay until all had reached their homes; when it was found that no one was seriously hurt.

This incident well shows the prejudice with which many Armenians regarded the advent of the American missionaries, an attitude which has since greatly changed. The majority now realize that the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions has not sent its missionaries for the purpose of proselytizing, but in order to enlighten and bless. The latter attempted at first to work in association with the Gregorian Church and thus avoid setting up a separate community, but it was ultimately found impracticable to do this.

The work of the Board is aided by educational, medical, and publishing departments, whilst a new work has been thrust upon its missionaries during recent years by the hundreds of "massacre" orphans whom they have been called upon to care for. Five splendid colleges have been established, and on most of the mission stations, in addition to good schools, there is a hospital. Aided by grants from The Religious Tract Society of London and The American Tract Society, suitable literature is printed and disseminated.

The total number of missionaries of the Board, in Turkey, male and female, is 187, or deducting the 26 in European

Turkey, there are 161 in Asia Minor. This is more than ever before, and there is much cause to thank God for the excellent results achieved by the Board in Turkey, and the steady increase in the number of its churches and church members, the latter of whom total up to close upon fourteen thousand.

There has, however, been a large diminution during the past twenty years in the grants made by the Board for objects other than missionary salaries, due to the fact that the gifts of American churches have not increased proportionately to the growth of the work. One happy result is that some of the native churches have enlarged their gifts for their own work, and a few more have become self-supporting; the unhappy result, however, is that many small and weak congregations have been left without any spiritual guide, and unless this state of things is remedied, many of them must eventually break up and disappear.

Excellent work has been done in Armenia with the money supplied by American Christians, and by the men and women, of piety and ability whom they have sent there, but as one thinks of the splendid plant laid down for doing missionary work, partly paralyzed by lack of means and labourers, and considers the fact that for many departments of their work the missionaries of the Board are compelled to seek funds in England or Europe, one cannot help wishing that Americans, who founded this work, might realize more fully the responsibility and privilege resting upon them to supply it adequately with means and men. The lack of a sufficient number of workers on the mission stations often prevents the full spiritual harvest being reaped which should accrue from the labour and money expended in establishing the work.

There are two Societies working in England which raise funds for Armenia, and help to supply the American missionaries labouring there, with the means

for carrying on their work:—"The Friends of Armenia," which, organised in 1897, has, besides undertaking the sale of work done by the widows and orphans, forwarded over £52,000 to the distressed districts, and "The Bible Lands Mission Aid Society," founded in 1854 by the late Rev. W. A. Essery, which, as its name implies, includes a number of other countries besides Armenia in the sphere of its ministrations.

The present attitude taken by the Gregorian Church towards the work of the Board varies greatly in different localities, but, on the whole, appears to be friendly, and the line of separation between the two communities is now somewhat less sharp than it has been. One great cause of this is the amount of relief and orphanage work that has been carried on during the time which has elapsed since the great massacres, which has convinced the people of the disinterestedness of the missionaries.

The missionaries and their adherents are usually referred to by natives as Protestants, this word being used to distinguish them from Gregorians. A remarkable feature is the number of Armenians who regularly attend, and obtain enlightenment from, the Protestant services, whilst at the same time continuing their membership of the Gregorian Church. This, I think, is one of the best proofs that the missionaries are not there to proselytise. Both in this way, and by giving them an object to emulate, they are achieving their aim of infusing new spiritual life into the national church of Armenia.

Van, being one of the most remote of the mission stations, it is only thirty-three years since work was commenced there by Dr. G. C. Reynolds. This veteran missionary still continues his labours in that town, and Dr. Hepworth well speaks of him as having been "worth more to the cause of law and order in that disturbed vilayet than a whole battalion of Turkish cavalry." To his long and self-denying labours much of the present

success of the work must be attributed, and that his efforts have not been without some personal risk is attested by the following story of how, in company with another missionary, Mr. Knapp, he was brutally attacked by Koords in the year 1883, and narrowly escaped with his life.

Whilst travelling from Moosh to Bitlis, they arrived towards nightfall at the village of a Koordish chief named Moussa Bey, where they arranged to stay until morning. They were accommodated in an Armenian stable, and during the evening, whilst they were seated inside it, the chief entered. Not recognising him, they did not rise to do him honour, but as soon as they had been informed of his identity sent him a cup of tea. This he declined, apparently chosing to consider that he had not been treated with sufficient respect.

Next morning, when all were ready to start, the departure of the load horses was delayed by the stealing of an umbrella, which had been evidently taken for that purpose. The morning was fine, the sun had just begun to show itself above the horizon ; before them was a little wooded knoll which juttet out into the Moosh plain, and the missionaries, anxious to continue the journey, mounted their horses and rode on.

As they descended the other side of this hill three Koords approached them from the opposite direction. Dr. Raynolds was walking, leading his horse, and neither had any thought of harm being intended. When they were near enough to shake hands, the centre Koord, who was Moussa Bey, without any word, raised a long sword in the air and began striking the Doctor. The first blow took his hat off, the second made a gash on his head from which the blood flowed. He tried to seize the hand that was wielding the weapon, but instead caught hold of the blade close to the handle, which cut his fingers to the bone. He was not successful in stopping the blows

which continued to fall on his head and face, the marks of which he bears to the present day. With blood flowing copiously from his wounds, he was thrown to the ground, as was also Mr. Knapp. The Koords then drew off their victims' boots, and dragged the missionaries to the cover of some bushes, where they took whatever they wished from their persons, and followed this by binding them hand and foot. Dr. Raynolds was blindfolded, and before his hands were tied he persuaded them to allow him to fasten the cloth round his head, and managed whilst doing so to staunch some of the blood which was flowing from the back of it.

After the Koords had gone, Dr. Raynolds succeeded in getting his hands free, and then released himself and his companion. Soon they heard loud talking on the road, and recognised the voices of their horsemen, though, as they were talking in Koordish, they could not understand what was being said. This conversation afterwards proved to be the meeting between these men and others, who, having taken possession of the missionaries' horses, were conveying them to Moussa Bey's village. The doctor and Mr. Knapp walked on towards the next village, whither the men had gone. Having about a dozen wounds on his head and hands, Dr. Raynolds here patched these up as best he could, and then, as the horses had been recovered, both missionaries rode on to Bitlis, a journey of eight hours.

Mr. Knapp was afterwards confronted in open court with a number of Koords, and positively identified Moussa Bey as the man who had inflicted the sword wounds. Demands for his punishment and for indemnity were made by the American minister. After some time, partly in consequence of this affair, Moussa Bey was banished to another district, and more than twenty years later two thousand five hundred dollars were paid by the Turkish Government as indemnity.

One would have thought that some restrictions would have at once been placed upon the activities of the murderous barbarian responsible for this outrage, but apparently nothing was done in this way. "His story dragged on for years, filled many pages of Blue Books and drove even so powerful an Ambassador as the late Sir William White to despair." Here is a description of some of his after performances :—

"He was angered at the Moosh Christians for the complaints they were forwarding against him, which possibly were not entirely true. One man, named Ohan, who had been prominent in making these representations to the authorities, had occasion to go from Moosh to Bitlis, and was careful to keep his intention secret. Moussa, however, learned of it, and placed four or five men on the road, who captured him, though fleeing by night to escape observation. They took him to a Koordish village, where the chief put him to death under circumstances of appalling torture."

"First he ignited powder he had poured into the right hand and one of the pockets—the one used to sign the petition, and the other in which he had conveyed it. Afterwards he stabbed him and threw him on a bonfire which he had ordered made. To a bystanding Koord, on remonstrancing with him at inflicting such cruelty, he replied, 'Let me not hear a word from you, or I will treat you in the same manner.' The Pasha summoned the Bey on his return to the city, but allowed him to escape to his village on the Moosh Plain."

His revenge on others who complained was to burn them alive after pouring petroleum over them. The Koords connected with him are said to dress themselves as women, and approaching unprotected groups of village women when in the open country to seize and violate them. In one village of Akhlat, where his demand met with a refusal, the Kiaya and another man were killed on

the following day. The state of alarm is said to be so great that the villagers in some parts leave their houses and hide from sunset to sunrise. "Otherwise," Moussa is reported as saying, "I will procure a load of noses and ears from slaughtered Christian victims."

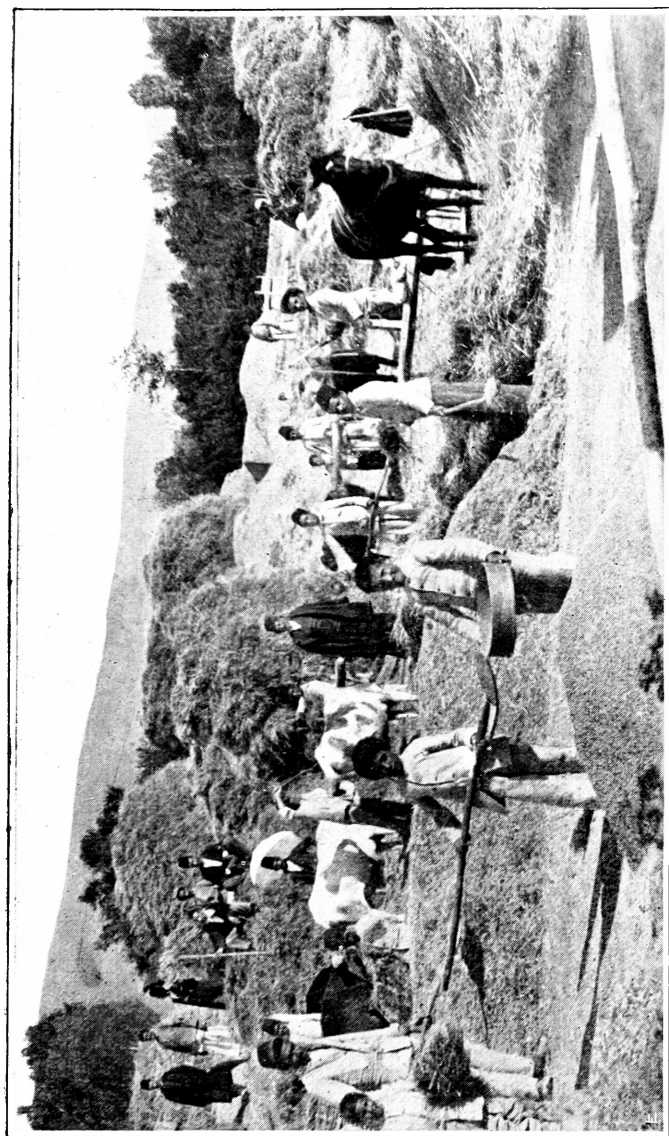
The subsequent history of this man is too long to tell in detail. The Sultan at first said the charges against so exemplary a young man could not be true, but at last, as a sop to the Ambassador, he was arrested, and then promptly allowed to escape. In the end the ruffian was, as already related, "banished," but the evils complained of were in no way abated.

I must now return, however, to Van, and give some description of life on the mission station, where Dr. Raynolds and his wife have laboured for so many years.

In thinking of the work carried on at this place, one is apt to compare it to a flourishing and flowering shrub which has grown too large for the flower-pot in which it was originally planted. During my visit I saw everywhere signs of great stretching in an attempt to make the material supply suffice for the great demand created by the rapid growth of the work, and the buildings on the premises seemed insufficient for effectively coping with the stream of need which flowed around them.

Every spare nook and cranny was filled by an orphan. There were two well-built missionary houses and a girls' school, whilst some rather less pretentious buildings around a large quadrangle did duty for orphan workshops, dormitories, bakery, school-rooms, church and orphanage.

No modern inspector would have allowed such overcrowding, rendered necessary by the hundreds of orphans suddenly thrust upon the missionaries by the massacres. There were about five hundred on this station alone. In one large upper room, approached from outside by a wooden staircase, the orphans, together with children from the town, did their lessons during the day, then,



ORPHAN BOYS HARVESTING NEAR VAN.

having done duty as a school, this room was used for study until required for the public service. One of these was held every evening, and had it been the only event of the day, the ventilation would have been none too good. What the state of the atmosphere was like under these circumstances can be better imagined than described.

Since I left Van, the buildings there have, I am glad to say, been greatly improved, and the dispensary, hospital, and girl's orphanage, which were then in course of construction, have been completed. The hospital contains over forty beds, and has an excellent operating room. The orphanage, built with money sent by German friends, and now in the charge of two ladies of that nationality, can accommodate eighty of the two hundred and twenty girl orphans still under the care of the missionaries. Another and more important building erected since my departure is a splendid church, which comfortably seats eight hundred people.

Had it not been for this friendly American territory, the Armenian quarter, in which it is situated, would long ere this have become a veritable Aceldama. It was on these premises that, at the time of the great massacre which occurred in this town in June, 1896, the British Consul unfurled the flag of his nation and gave protection to thousands.

It was a terrible time. Many trying weeks of strain and anxiety had succeeded one another, weeks when men's hearts were failing for fear, when women would start with a nervous frightened look on hearing a footstep, when little children went to bed at night to cry themselves to sleep.

Then came the dreaded event. On a certain Sunday night, the Armenians were awakened by the sound of guns, lasting for several minutes, and followed for half an hour by loud bugle calls. Whilst frightened Christians crouched in terror within their houses, a Turkish officer

and some soldiers were carried into the town wounded. Probably they had received their injuries whilst trying to prevent Koords from smuggling salt into the town, it being forbidden to do this without paying duty as this mineral is a Government monopoly and its importation contraband.

The Turks, however, reported that the wounds had been received from Armenians, and made this incident the pretext for the terrible scenes which followed. Desultory firing was kept up during the day, and in the afternoon clouds of smoke testified to the burning of a number of houses. The sounds of guns were occasionally heard throughout the two following days, and the burning of the houses continued. Then the people streamed on to the mission premises in thousands, taking refuge beneath the British flag and carrying with them bedding and food. Numbers of wounded arrived, some with terrible sword slashes on head and shoulders : many others had big, gaping wounds, some had ears or noses almost severed, or hands mangled and swollen, and not a few required to have bullets extracted from limbs or other parts, keeping the missionary doctors hard at work all day.

The two acres which at that time comprised the missionary premises, "were covered as thickly as human beings could be packed, probably no less than fifteen thousand persons making up this aggregate of suffering humanity." Houses, schools, stables, and sheds were filled to overflowing, and those who approached the missionaries' dwellings at night had to pick their way amidst sleeping thousands, who covered almost every inch of ground on the place, some with bedding and some without. The terrified people remained in this irregular camp for several days, protecting themselves, as much as possible, from falling rain, with boards, carpets, and blankets which they found on the premises. Finally, as a result

of a petition for mercy, they were allowed to return to their homes, many to find them either plundered or burnt to ashes. Most of them, as they went, had on their backs household goods which they had managed to bring with them, great piles of bedding, boxes of clothing, and copper vessels of every shape and size.

During the week that the massacre lasted, about five hundred were killed in the city and another five hundred within a radius of ten miles, whilst of those who tried to escape from the town about one thousand were killed on the Persian frontier. The deaths which occurred during the following three months from sickness, shock, and exposure—largely the outcome of the massacre—were probably in excess of those which took place during that awful week.

In case any should think that work among the Armenians must be a hopeless task, let me say that I found in these down-trodden members of the suffering church in Turkey a greater receptivity for, and appreciation of, spiritual things than I have ever found in the homeland.

Hopeless? The ground is fruitful, intensely so. The thousands of Armenians who laid down their lives at the time of the massacres did not die on behalf of a political propaganda, they laid them down for the Gospel, as a testimony to the Moslem world of the power of a living Christ. Most of those martyrs, had they wished, might have saved themselves by holding up one little finger as a sign that they accepted Islam. But they chose death rather than deny His Name, and their sentiments were well voiced by the old priest at Sassoun, who, when the Gospels he was in the habit of using in church were brought to him, and he was asked to curse them and live, replied :—"Do with me what you will, I cannot curse these symbols of our holy religion."

The children of those who laid down their lives for

their faith make anything but hopeless ground. The hopelessness of the work is the knowledge the missionary has that he is not able to lighten the terrible bondage and burden under which his people live, and that at any moment his work may be arrested through the converts being struck down by the "sword of Islam."

I had not been long at Van ere I found that the work which God had sent me to do would occupy much more time than anticipated. The Holy Spirit seemed to have been preparing the people for a revival and, from the first, enquirers were so numerous that, instead of staying for three weeks, I remained there for as many months, during the whole of which time I was kept busy with them, except when taking services. I cannot do better than give some idea of the way in which these days of happy service were spent.

After breakfast we cross the quadrangle to the school-room in time for the service, which commences at half-past seven in the morning. The building is nearly full, the bright faces of the orphan girls who are seated on the floor beside the platform lend cheerfulness to the scene, and the singing of hymns in a minor key goes on, whilst people continue to flock in. One wonders why they are not more punctual, but this is explained by the fact that their watches are set to Turkish time, which varies every day with the setting of the sun.

The service lasts for one hour, and all listen attentively and reverently to what is said. Then they disperse, the orphans to their schoolroom or to the workshops in which they are learning trades, the men to the markets in the town and the women to their homes.

We now make our way to the enquiry room and find one or two waiting for an interview. A noticeable difference from Western Christianity is the frankness with which all speak on spiritual topics; there is none of that false shame often met with elsewhere.

After seeing several of the men and women, and helping them as far as possible, there is a buzz of voices outside the door, and a teacher enters to ask if a class of schoolgirls can be spoken with. They file in, numbering perhaps a dozen, and sit in a circle on the floor, each one with some perplexity to be solved. At first they are rather shy, then one asks: "How can I know that I am saved?"

This leads on to other questions, and before they go some have made life-decisions, and, accepting God's way of salvation, have yielded their lives to Him. After prayer they leave, and other enquirers enter, sometimes men or women who have come to the mission station for medical treatment. Then a party of boys arrive to tell of their decision for Christ made in the service held on the preceding day. They ask the question so often put by these young disciples:—"How can we overcome Satan?" and, after speaking with them, they are each given a copy of a little Armenian tract which I have had printed, giving a reply to this query.

As they go away, promising to come to the boys' prayer meeting which has just been started, four other boys enter. We know three of them. They were converted in the first meetings, and, although only about twelve years of age, are quite clear in their minds as to their acceptance of the Saviour, and His acceptance of them. They are little missionaries, and, in spite of petty persecutions from school-fellows, are earnestly seeking to lead their companions to share in the joy which is unmistakably written on their faces. They have brought one of these now as an enquirer, and sit around him on the floor, with bright, happy smiles, while he is spoken with.

The next one to enter is a teacher bringing a very shy schoolgirl who, covering her face with her apron, sinks to the floor. Girls in this country are taught that it is immodest to let a man see their faces, consequently it is impossible to get this one to uncover hers and look up.

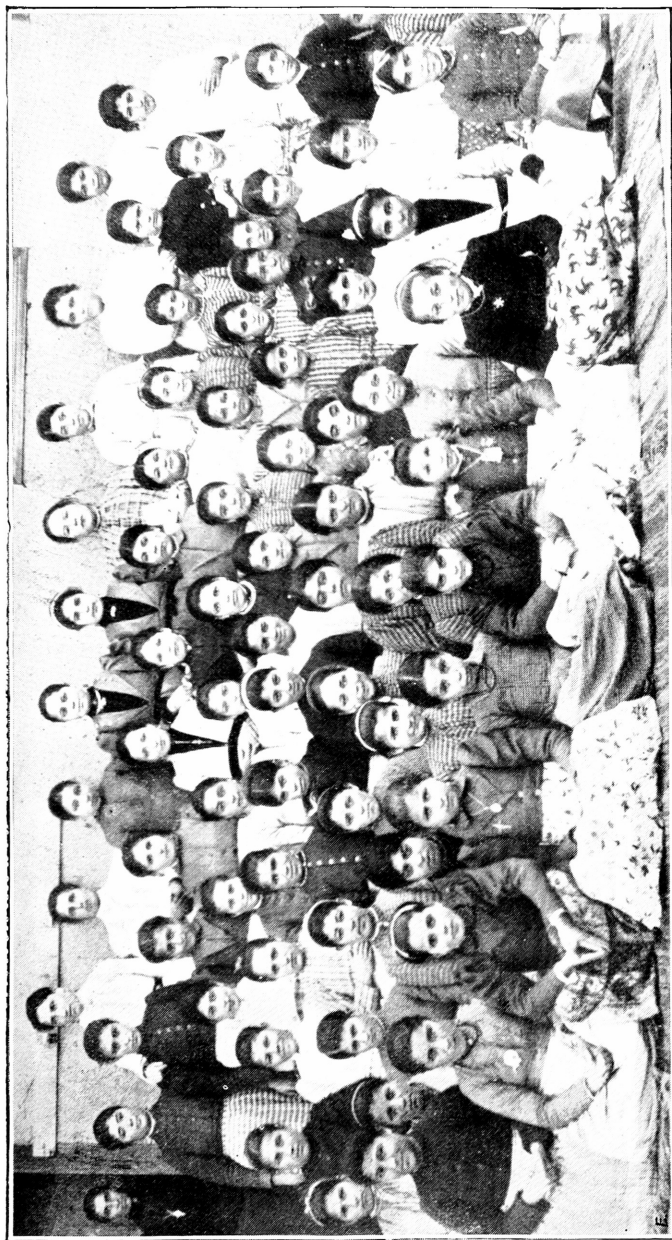
“Well, *archig*,” we ask, “what can we do to help you?”

“I want to know how to be saved,” comes through the thin piece of cloth from which the apron is made. After a series of questions and answers, the truths of redemption are made clear to this young mind, she is shown the duties incumbent upon the followers of Christ, then, ere she goes, references to certain verses which will be helpful to her are written on a slip of paper, which she takes away.

With many enquirers coming and going the time for the mid-day meal soon arrives, and this being over, we make our way to a service, which has been specially arranged for all those engaged in work on the missionary premises. These make up quite a considerable number; there are the book-keeper, the store-keeper, dispensers and nurses from the hospital, the men who teach trades, such as carpentry, building, weaving, tailoring, and bootmaking, to the orphans, the women who mend their clothes or keep the buildings clean, the men who bake for them, together with missionary servants, school teachers, and several village evangelists.

The service over, we again see enquirers, and some of them are very interesting cases. One man, a well-to-do-church adherent, confesses that on some past occasion he gained money in a doubtful manner. His conscience is uneasy, and he wishes to know how to set the matter right. He is told that he must make restoration to the one he has defrauded. “That will make me a poor man,” he says, “nevertheless I will do it.” He says good-bye and I see him no more, but a year afterwards receive a letter telling of how he went to the village where the man lived whom he considered he had robbed, and, calling together its inhabitants, publicly confessed his sin and made restitution.

“We have never seen such a thing happen before,”



HAPPY SCHOOL GIRLS AT VAN.

Many shewn in this picture were present at the services I conducted.

said the villagers, whereupon the man, hitherto timid, began to preach the Gospel to them.

After he has gone from the enquiry room we make preparation for the boys' prayer-meeting held at four o'clock in the afternoon. Sixty or seventy of them, fresh from school, burst into the room. They come of their own accord, and all are prepared to engage in audible prayer. Soon they are singing in their native tongue several bright choruses, then, beginning with the front row, and passing gradually to the back, each in turn engages in prayer, the petitions being interspersed at brief intervals by united singing. Some have never prayed in public before, but they are helped and blessed by thus breaking the ice.

After this meeting has closed and supper is over we go to the evening service which, closing about nine o'clock, brings the day's duties to an end.

Some of the members of the old Gregorian church were, during the first part of my visit to Van, inclined to oppose my work, and made some adverse criticisms regarding me, to which I was urged to reply.

I at first took no notice, but on again being pressed to deny them, told those who spoke to me the story of the prodigal son, and said, "I am in the place of the prodigal who has returned and is seated at the Father's table enjoying His rich provision; and, as the man in the parable did not go and argue with the elder brother who was making complaints outside, but went on enjoying His Father's bounty, I intend to do the same and therefore cannot reply."

I was glad to find that they said nothing more, and before I left the town their opposition had almost entirely ceased, many having quite changed their attitude towards me.

One member of the old church, however, who was converted during the services, and who stood up and gave

a public testimony to the change that had been wrought in his life as the result, was waylaid and beaten, on his way home at night, by some members of that church; which shows that animosity towards Protestantism is not wholly dead.

Ere leaving Van I was permitted to see some very gratifying evidences of the way in which the Holy Spirit had been working in the hearts of the people. The good work which had commenced amongst the children spread to the adults, and the church seemed to be quickened. One church meeting was very powerful; members who had been criticising one another stood up and confessed it, asking forgiveness.

Two, who had had differences, publicly embraced and kissed one another, and thus, as pride went out, deeper love flowed in.

For a few days I lived with a native evangelist in the city in order to see enquirers there. Then on a certain Saturday, which I had set apart for rest, a man arrived whilst I was at breakfast, and said: "I have been to try and see you several times, but you were always busy with others; now I have found you, I am ready to leave my business and stay here all day! He was a shop-keeper, seemed under deep conviction, wept much when I spoke with him, and afterwards showed his gratitude by sending a small thankoffering.

Another man who came had been made miserable through doubting, and had purchased a harp in the hope that it would make him happy. He said that since he had come to trust fully in the Lord he had so much joy that the harp was no longer needed.

I received many dozens of letters from those who had been led to give their lives to Christ, numbers of which are before me as I write. The following is one of these, as written in the pigeon English of the natives:—

“ My dear Benefactor,

“ I do very much thank from you and your words which became the cause of my salvation. Though I had gone often to the chapel and I had heard sermons but they had not effected me so much as your words. Thrice I heard your sermons, by the first two I became converted but I did not confess Jesus, afraid that others will laugh about me, but by your last sermon I was encouraged. From hence I was not afraid from confessing Jesus name, and however is possible I will try to speak to others concerning Jesus.”

Dr. Raynolds, in writing of the work, says :

“ The Lord has added His blessing to Mr. Campbell's work, and a pretty large number from the children in the schools and from the young men and adults about us have become interested in spiritual things and give reason to hope that they are converted. One of the hardest things to accomplish among our people is to secure personal testimony as to what the Lord has done for individual souls, but during the last few days several meetings have been set apart as testimony meetings, and a large number have given their witness as to what the Lord has done for their souls. Quite a number of individuals from the rowdy class have already come out and taken a decided stand on the Lord's side, and shew a very marked change of conduct and character.”

I received many touching proofs of the love of these people, whose hearts “ the Lord opened,” and who sought to shew their gratitude for blessing received by showering upon me little tokens of their esteem.

I had had the help of three native evangelists, and one of these, whom I will call Peter, to whom I became greatly attached, waited upon me almost night and day, ever trying to save me from unnecessary work. It was quite enough for him to know that I needed anything. He would be sure to provide it if it lay within his power to do

so. As I was with him for months, both in Van, and afterwards in dangerous experiences elsewhere, I had good opportunity of becoming acquainted with his character. His faithfulness, kindness and unselfishness, which were beyond praise, speak volumes for the training he had had under Dr. Raynolds' care, in the mission orphanage.

Arriving home late on the night previous to my departure from Van, and with the not very pleasant task before me of packing up, I found that he had forestalled me, and left the following note in my room, written in English :—

“ Dear Mr. Campbell,

“ I arranged your all slides, ties, handkerchieves, and your bed. Enjoy your sleep easy. Good night!—

“ PETER.”

It was arranged that a testimony meeting should be held during the last week of my stay, and although some feared it might prove a failure, so many wanted to testify that the meeting had to be continued for three nights. All hearts were full of praise to God for the way in which He had been working; some told of a new experience of life in Christ, others of doubts and difficulties removed, whilst more than one was able to say to the praise and glory of God :—“ One thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.”

CHAPTER VIII

A VISIT TO VILLAGES

A LITTLE knot of Armenians were gathered around the doorway of Dr. Raynolds' house at about six o'clock on a cold, bright morning in the month of February. The town of Van had scarcely wakened from its slumbers, everywhere that the eye looked it rested on snow, and though the air was keen and frosty, there was a refreshing vigour in the atmosphere which made one feel glad to be alive. Rumour said that the roads were in a very bad condition, and in places almost impassable, but as I had decided to leave the town, the Armenians had come to bid me an early farewell ere going to breakfast or to business. On the premises where I had been staying I had noticed a large sledge, of somewhat heavy construction, built on low runners, which had been used during the winter months for traversing the three miles of road leading to the city. Having obtained permission, I decided to make the experiment of travelling part of the way round the lake on this. As I drove towards the exit from the compound the road was lined on either side with orphan children who sang a farewell hymn.

At the city a halt was made for a photograph (*see frontispiece*) and to pick up the zabtieh. I was fortunate in having with me a woollen helmet which, originally made for the soldiers in South Africa, had deviated from its intended career, and was intensely useful throughout the journey. The cold was always felt most in the head, and at times

it was so intense that my breath froze into pieces of ice on my moustache, so I would recommend any traveller in those districts to be provided with some such contrivance, as well as with a pair of dark glasses for preserving the eyes from the intense glare of the sun on the snow. I had with me, in addition to the two drivers, the native evangelist, Peter, and Dr. Raynolds, and Dr. Ussher drove down to the city to see me off.

As the sledge moved away from the precincts of the city on what was to be an eventful journey, a man rushed out of the gate in hot haste and endeavoured to overtake us, but was too late. I heard afterwards that he was an Armenian, who had received great blessing through the preaching of God's word during my stay in the town, and who had left his shop and rushed out to show his gratitude by giving me a piece of money as a thankoffering. God continually gave me such tokens as this of His approval of the work He enabled me to do.

The zabtieh, who had a white turban round his fez to denote that he was a holy man, had to pay rather dearly for his religious scruples, which were the means of causing some amusement to the rest of the party. The snow was frozen very hard, the sledge skimmed over it at an alarming rate, and soon our poor protector, who was mounted on a horse, was left far behind. After some time we persuaded him to sit on the sledge, his horse being tethered in the rear. In order to keep as far as possible from Christians he perched himself on a pile of luggage near the front, from which position, at the first jolt of the sledge, he was unceremoniously pitched head first into the snow and left behind, all that was visible of him being the official legs sticking up in the air as he struggled to extricate himself from his undignified plight. This occurred so often that finally he thought it better to risk contamination from Christians than to have a series of involuntary snow baths.

My object in travelling round the north of Lake Van to Bitlis instead of by the shorter and more direct road to the south was two-fold. The latter route was more mountainous and was said to be impassable on account of the heavy snow, whilst on that to the north lay the small town of Agantz in which I had been asked to conduct some services. Our sledge travelled so rapidly on this first day that the Armenian village in which we were to stay for the night was reached at about four p.m. I paid a visit to the Gregorian church in which some of the villagers had gathered for an afternoon service, and on the way there saw an instance of the manner in which the Armenians are expected to wait on their over-lords the Koords. A party of these rode into the village and instantly several Armenians ran forward with the servility of slaves, waited on them hand and foot, took their horses to the stable, and went off to prepare a meal for their visitors, which I was told they would have to provide free of charge.

After examining the usual bevy of invalids who crowd around one in these out of the way places, and advising them as best I could, I returned to the stable allotted to me for the night. It had no window, and as I was not allowed to leave the door open, there was not one square inch of ventilation; the interior was in almost total darkness, whilst crowded inside it were our four steaming steeds and the usual complement of buffaloes, cows, etc. The state of the atmosphere can be better imagined than described; I was obliged at intervals during the evening to rush out and get a breath of fresh air. The heat caused by the presence of so many animals made sleep almost impossible, and the men, who rose about an hour after midnight to feed and clean the horses, made so much noise as to render futile any further attempts in this direction.

At about five a.m. we made a start for Agantz, which,

in the summer, is a nine hours' ride from the village where we passed the night. Descending a steep mountain-side we reached the shore of the lake, and soon afterwards, whilst travelling close to its margin, the sledge, which was going at a good rate of speed, struck suddenly a hidden rock. The force of this shock brought it to a standstill, the front part, to which the traces were attached broke off, and we saw our horses galloping away with this dangling behind them. Fortunately we were seated at the rear of our conveyance: our driver, who was in front, was pitched head first into the snow. Nobody was hurt by this mishap, our horses were brought back, and taking a hint from the drivers of other vehicles in these districts we tied ours together with string. After a delay of half an hour we once more made a start, but encountered so much soft snow as to make progress almost impossible. The sledge proved to be too heavy and of too low a build, in consequence of which the whole front of it dragged in the snow, and we seriously considered the advisability of abandoning it and continuing on horseback. Unfortunately there were no saddles, so we were obliged to lay aside this project and get out and walk, leaving the three horses to drag the sledge along as best they could.

At the head of the lake we halted for lunch at a village inhabited by Koords who were devil worshippers. In the districts to the south of Lake Van there are considerable communities of these people who are known as Yezids. They have a distinct and organised form of worship, and in many places have shrines built for the adoration of the evil one. Professor Spiro shows them as also inhabiting parts of the region around Erivan in Southern Russia. Our zabtieh, being a very strict Moslem, seemed to be even more disgusted with them that he was with Christians, and in order to prevent any evil attaching to him, went to a little distance from the village, spread his coat on

the ground, and went through the various contortions of a Mohammedan prayer, first standing upright, then bending forward with hands on knees, afterwards kneeling and bending forward twice, each time touching the ground with his face, then rising and repeating the performance *ad infinitum*.

We struggled bravely throughout that day in order to reach Agantz, as we knew that all the other villages between us and that town were Koordish and for that reason not particularly safe. However, as night began to fall we found that owing to the heavy snow we had only covered half our intended distance, and were therefore obliged to make for a Koordish village and ask for accommodation until morning. It was not without some misgivings and some exercise of faith that we turned our horses' heads in the direction of one of these. On seeing us approach, a number of armed Koords galloped up to receive us, and on entering the main thoroughfare we were assailed by fierce dogs of alarming size whose masters had considerable difficulty in keeping from pouncing on the sledge and attacking us. The zabtieh, who had ridden on ahead, now met us and led us to the house of the chief, at which he had arranged for us to stay. As usual the houses were built in a semi-underground fashion.

At the entrance to the abode of the chief stood a man, fierce and well armed, whose dark swarthy face peered out as he told me to take his hand and let him guide me through the long passage which led to the living room of my host. I must confess that I would have much preferred to follow him at a little distance with a lighted candle in my hand, but it would not do to show fear, so taking hold of his hand and bending low to avoid knocking my head, I followed him into the dark labyrinthine passage, mentally speculating as to the possibilities of having a dagger thrust into me on the way. These pas-

sages are purposely made long and tortuous, with many doors placed at intervals along them, so as to make it difficult for robbers to enter. We finally reached a low door which, on being opened, gave access to what was a comparatively nice room. On one side, smoking a cigarette, sat the Agha or chief with a number of his followers close beside him, all being heavily armed, and presenting a somewhat formidable appearance. As is customary, a servant came forward and pulled off my boots as soon as I entered, and I noticed that he looked with somewhat envious eyes at the goloshes which were on them, a fact which made me decide that I would have to invent some excuse for asking for them before the evening was over.

The chief was very attentive, a fire was lighted, the smoke as usual filling the room and making our eyes smart with pain, until finally he probably discovered that they had not unstopped the chimney, over which a stone is sometimes placed to keep out the cold and snow, for, after awhile, the atmosphere cleared somewhat, and I was able to make some tea, which was passed round to the chief and his retainers. It is said that if a Koord can be persuaded to eat or drink with you he is your friend, and I was glad that these fierce brigands accepted the glasses of tea that were handed to them.

It is not the custom to drink with meals, usually tea or some other beverage is served about one hour before food is taken. The room we were in was arranged in the style common to most of these villages, a doorway in the centre of the wall at one end, a fireplace in the centre of the wall at the opposite end, a pathway running across from one to the other, on which, as it was uncarpeted, one might walk without removing outdoor footgear; on either side of this central path a piece of felt or carpet spread on the ground, with cushions placed upon it on which to squat, after having removed one's shoes. The

evening was spent in conversation with the Agha, who asked many questions regarding British civil and military affairs, as well as the differences existing between various Christian sects. He said there were so many of these that he could not tell which was the right one. I pointed out that his own religion was split into various divisions, a fact which he made no attempt to deny.

"England is against Turkey now," he remarked. "She has taken Egypt from us, and interfered with regard to Crete when she had no right to do so." He waxed quite warm on this topic, and I feared was trying to pick a quarrel, so I assured him that I was not personally responsible for England's actions, but, unfortunately, he persisted in regarding me as someone of great political importance in the land from which I hailed. I told him that in India we respected and gave equal rights to the Mohammedans, and to those whose religious beliefs differed from our own, and we would like Turkey to follow our example in this respect. I was astonished at the enlightenment and knowledge which this Koordish chief had regarding politics generally. He boasted with great exuberance and pride of the cleverness of the Sultan in hoodwinking the Powers.

I was much surprised at what seemed a very unusual glimmering of a moral sense in this brigand chief. I had been described to him as a Protestant, and he asked Peter, who was with me, whether I drank intoxicants.

"No," answered Peter, "he does not."

"Does the Bey smoke?" was the next query.

On receiving a negative reply he turned to his followers, and not knowing that Peter understood Koordish, remarked in that language :

"See what good people these Protestants are ; this one neither drinks nor smokes."

It seemed strange that this man, the chief of a wild Koordish village, should have thought that there was any

virtue attaching to abstinence from these things, and where he got such an idea from I cannot imagine. He and most of the men in the village were members of the Hamidieh.

During the evening a woman, who appeared to be the wife of this man, entered the room. I was surprised at the fact that they allowed me to see her. Standing beside the chief she spent the greater part of her time in going through the formalities of a prayer, and I was told that she was specially invoking protection from the evil spirits which our presence had brought into the house.

Many other callers dropped in, and the whole of the time I was conversing with the chief I had to keep my eyes on the luggage, to see that nothing was carried off by our visitors. I was unable to secure the room to myself for the night, several others also occupying it. Before retiring I examined my boots, and found as expected that the goloshes had been removed from them. The servant had evidently hidden them in the hope that their disappearance would not be noticed. Calling my host, I asked him to obtain them for me, and after a good deal of difficulty he did so.

We rose at five o'clock next morning only to find that a snowstorm was raging. During the three hours whilst waiting for it to pass over, I was unable, for one minute, to take my eyes off the baggage, on top of which the chief's servant had seated himself, evidently with the determination to replace the goloshes with something equally useful. Our host invited us to stay for several days, but the continual watching of the baggage was such a wearisome task, that, when the storm abated a little, I decided to continue, and we started out again over the hills and plains, the newly-fallen snow rendering progress even more difficult than it had been on the preceding day.

Presently we reached a deep gully with steep sides,

along the bottom of which a brook ran. It was bridged over by a layer of ice and snow, two or three feet in thickness, and we were hopeful that this might bear the weight of our sledge. Our driver alighted and went ahead to try ; we saw him reach the centre of the natural bridge, but the ice was evidently weaker than we had imagined, for he sank through it until only his head remained above the surface of the ground. The zabtieh who went to rescue him shared a similar fate, and both presented a very comical appearance with their heads just showing above the ground. After helping these two men to reach *terra firma* we broke down the natural bridge, and, with a chopper, which was the only tool available, commenced the task of cutting the opposite bank of the gully until of a sufficient slope to allow of our sledge running up it.

After a hard day's journey we reached Agantz towards evening, having taken three days to make a journey which, had there been a small steamer on the lake, might have occupied only two or three hours. The sledge pulled up outside the house of an Armenian who had arranged to receive me as his guest. Viewed from outside, it was not a very pretentious building, yet my host was one of the most influential of the Christians in the town. Whilst a curious crowd of villagers gathered round the sledge and passed remarks about its weight, sarcastically referring to it as a "raft," this man came forward and welcomed me, and we together made our way towards the entrance to his dwelling-place.

"Hold the dog, Dikran," he shouts, as we approach the door. At these words a young Armenian rushes out of the house and holds a huge dog by the neck in order to allow us to pass in safety. After going through a large wooden gate, on one side of which the dog, forcibly restrained by Dikran, is trying to attack me, I find myself in a small courtyard which has to be crossed

ere access is gained to the house. Inside this building a kitchen and store-room seem to comprise the whole of the ground floor premises, but my kind-hearted host, who has come out in flowing *zoboön* to greet me, is now motioning me to ascend the stairs.

A low, long growl, followed by a fierce bark, and a most evil-faced dog is preparing to fly at me from a dark corner of the landing at the top. Fortunately I have thick leggings on, and ere much damage is done my host's little seven year old daughter has appeared through a doorway. She is simply dressed, has no shoes on, but wears the pretty white knitted wool stockings of the country, and after quieting the dog places her small foot on its neck until I pass into the room—a large, low-ceiled apartment, having windows along either side and a raised divan at the end opposite the door; this, together with the floor, being carpeted with soft woolly rugs of harmonious colours. There is an iron stove in which wood is burning, and there are cushions, on which to rest, placed on the floor along the wall on either side, but there is no furniture, nor does such appear to be needed, the look of this sort of room with its tempting cushions and divan being more refreshing to a tired traveller than the luxurious stateliness of a Western drawing-room.

The sons of the household greet me with courtly grace and proceed to attend to my comfort. I am escorted to the divan, and after seating myself, my boots are pulled off, and I can then enjoy with the natives the luxury of walking about on the carpeted floor, unfettered by shoes or slippers and free from all fear of meeting with the tin-tack or pin of civilization.

A glass of hot tea, with sugar but no milk, is now served to all present, then a large metal basin and ewer are brought in, and I am invited to wash, in preparation for the evening meal. Ablutions are always accomplished



AN ARMENIAN FAMILY,

by getting some friend or servant to stand by and slowly pour the water over the hands as required.

Later in the evening my host bids me to be seated beside a small wooden stool, about eighteen inches high, which has been brought into the room, and on which there is presently placed a large copper tray. Round the edges of this, pieces of flat bread are laid, folded like serviettes, and, in the centre, a steaming basin of hot rice soup.

When all the men have squatted on cushions around this repast, grace is said in the Armenian tongue, and my host, with a courtly wave of the hand, points to the soup and with the word “Rahmutsek,”—“Help yourself,”—invites me to take the first spoonful, this being a mark of special honour paid to his guest. Thus, all eating from one dish, the meal commences. Though this is the living room of the family there are no women present, nor does one see them except when they chance to appear at the door with some of the requisites for our repast, which are, however, more usually brought from the kitchen by one of the younger sons, to prevent the women from showing themselves at all.

Many courses are served, the following being a list of some of the chief dishes :—

Rice soup, flavoured with herbs.

Boiled spinach, with poached eggs on top.

Porridge, very sweet, with oil poured on top.

Animal's foot, cooked and flavoured with garlic.

Preserved apricots in oil.

Stewed meat, with potatoes and haricots.

Madzoon, the staple food of the country. It is made by the fermentation of sour milk, looks like soft junket, and has an extremely acid taste which is usually unpleasant at first to Europeans, but soon acquired by them. The natives generally eat bread with it.

Pillav, a common and very palatable dish, made from

rice cooked with oil in such a manner that all the grains remain separate. It is always served as the last course.

Coffee and milk as beverages.

When this meal was over, some of the deacons of the church called to make arrangements regarding the services I was to conduct, after which we prepared to retire for the night. The room, in which we had our meal, served also as bedroom for all the male members of the family. From large recesses in the wall numbers of thick quilts were produced and spread upon the floor, and after the experiences of the two preceding nights I found that to sleep in this manner was very comfortable.

Agantz is inhabited by both Moslems and Christians; it has several streets of shops and a Gregorian and a Protestant church. I found the latter to be a dark, cold building, very small, and sadly in need of improvement. The congregations I had could barely crowd into it at times. God's presence was, however, manifested in the meetings, and I received letters from several telling that they had been the means of leading them to consecrate their lives to the service of Christ.

This town ought to be famed for the number of dogs it possesses. In addition to the two which my host kept, and which flew at me on every possible occasion, every other house seemed to possess at least one. These animals are trained to attack men, thus it is always unsafe to approach a Turkish village after dark. I saw one native compelled in daylight to turn back without entering this particular town, from fear of the dogs which attacked him every time he approached.

Whilst I was in this town there also visited it a Koordish chief through whose domains I was about to pass and who had shot the last European traveller who had entered the territory over which he held sway.

The story as I heard it was as follows:—

Dr. Belck, a German scientist, left Agantz accom-

panied by two men whom he had engaged to do duty as zabtiehs. When near the village of this chief he left the road and made his way up the side of a mountain, where he stopped to examine some specimens of rock. No Koords were to be seen, and feeling secure with the presence of his two protectors he spent some little time in research amongst the stones and boulders which lay scattered around him in rich profusion. On looking up from his work he was suddenly confronted by a band of armed Koords, at sight of whom his zabtiehs made off with all speed, leaving him to face them alone and unprotected. From behind a rock the chief of these brigands took aim and fired at the scientist, but the shot did not wound him seriously. Acting on a sudden impulse, Dr. Belck fell to the ground and cleverly pretended to be dead, lying perfectly still and holding his breath. It was an extremely perilous position to be in, and he realized that his only hope of safety lay in deceiving the Koords. The chief approached, struck him several times with his gun, and seeing no signs of life left him for dead.

Ere starting on this journey, Dr. Belck had been furnished, at the initiative of the German Emperor, with special papers ordering that he should be carefully protected from danger, and consequently after making his way back to Van he telegraphed to his Sovereign, who, in turn, made representations to the Sultan demanding satisfaction for the outrage. The chief was accordingly arrested, but his punishment was little more than a farce. He was imprisoned for less than two months, and soon after being released promoted to a higher post.

It was reported to me that when this man heard that I was about to attempt the journey through his district he remarked:—

“I wish I had known that the German wasn't dead, as in that case I would have made sure of him.”

I must confess that it was not without some misgivings that I made preparations to pass through the territory ruled over by him, and, having gone forth to preach the Gospel, I was firmly determined not to stop and examine rocks by the wayside.

CHAPTER IX

HAIRBREADTH ESCAPES

THE possession of a passport is one of the essentials for a journey in Turkey, and it is almost as difficult for a native in that land to travel without one as for a passenger on a British railway to travel without a ticket. He has a certain amount of liberty to move about within the vilayet in which he resides, but woe betide the unfortunate Christian who happens to cross over into another vilayet without having his *yol teskeri* or passport, showing that his taxes are paid and that he is a good citizen. In every town or village that he enters this document will be demanded by the police, and it is only by the payment of very heavy bribes in each place visited that he can hope to escape imprisonment if he fail to produce it. This paper does not, however, allow of his going abroad. For this, special permission is necessary, and in the great majority of cases absolutely unobtainable. Thus, whilst nominally free, the Armenians are actually imprisoned within the land of the Turk who closely watches the coast and the frontier to see that none escape. In this respect their condition reminds one forcibly of the bondage of the Israelites in Egypt.

Numbers continually make their way down to the coast, in the hope of getting on board a steamer unobserved by their taskmasters, but the majority are caught and sent back as prisoners. Occasionally one who has made his way on to a ship for the ostensible

purpose of selling wares will succeed in secreting himself until the vessel has left, but if he gains his liberty by this method the probability is that he will be kept from fully enjoying it by the fact that he is separated for life from all his relatives and friends. Should he be married his wife and children are left behind, and unless some consul can be persuaded to intervene on their behalf and procure passports for them he will never be able to see them again, because the Turk makes it a rule not to allow Armenians to return after they have once left his territory. It will be seen from this with what consummate skill the Turk has hedged in his Armenian ratepayer and victim, making escape from his clutches difficult to accomplish without the severance of the most sacred family ties. There are, I believe, one or two firms at the coast who make a business of smuggling Armenians out, at so much per head, but their opportunities of getting many out in this way are, naturally, very limited. In those few instances where I did meet with men who, after living in America or Europe, had smuggled their way back into Turkey, I usually found that they had returned in order to rejoin their families.

The town of Agantz is situated in the vilayet of Van. When the time came for leaving it and passing on into Bitlis vilayet, I discovered that Peter had no passport with him. The only thing to do therefore to ensure his safe return was, instead of changing zabtiehs at different stations en route, as is usually done, to take one all the way to the village of Aghagh, to which place I had hired the horses, and then send him back under the care of this official. The kymerkum very kindly gave permission for this, but the zabtieh with whom he provided me, though at first very servile, turned out to be a most unreliable character.

On the occasion when we were to leave Agantz our horses were very late, and it was almost nine o'clock ere

the jingling of bells told us that they had arrived. Whether they would be able to accomplish the journey no one would venture to say, though many expressed grave doubts, as caravans on the road had been blocked by the snow.

Our baggage having been affixed to the pack saddle of one of the horses, some native quilts were thrown over to form a comfortable seat, a piece of carpet placed above them to keep the snow, which was falling heavily, from wetting these, and then Peter, encased in the warmest clothing obtainable, mounted the top, and put his head through a hole in a native cloak made of felt which fastens around the neck and is known as a *yapunje*. This was very warm and proved of great service on the journey. The zabtieh arrived, mounted on a good horse, and after saying farewell, I got into the saddle and, encased in a large macintosh, followed him through the blinding snow. Outside the town I saw the reason for our late start. Another traveller was going in the same direction, and the horsemen had arranged, in order that we might travel together, to leave at the same time. He was a Mohammedan and had a zabtieh. A poor Armenian, unable to afford a horse, but anxious to travel with me, in order to avail himself of the protection of my zabtieh, followed on foot.

With a dull leaden sky overhead, with a cold wind nipping every unprotected part of our bodies, and with snow falling thickly around us, we made our way in solemn single file along the narrow path made by the tramping of natives as they passed from village to village, a snowy waste on every side, excepting away to the left where the waters of Lake Van could be discerned. Soon no villages were to be seen, the path became more and more difficult, on account of the soft snow, which was so deep that my stirrups were dragging in it, rendering my feet intensely cold. Sometimes the

horse I was riding would sink into a drift and be unable to kick its way out until I had thrown myself off its back, at which times I generally managed to scramble out almost as soon as my steed. We finally decided that the ordinary road was impassable and that we must therefore make the journey by skirting the margin of the lake, the snow there being less deep.

We had no time to lose. The territory through which we were passing was entirely Koordish, in which it would not be safe to pass the night : the first Armenian village, the one which we had decided to make our halting place that evening, was some considerable distance away. Before reaching it we had to traverse the domains of the chief who shot Dr. Belck. In order to avoid any stoppage in the vicinity of his village, we snatched a bite of food whilst leading our animals through the deep snow towards the border of the water. Then mounting again we continued the journey, the lake lying a short distance to our left, and rugged snow-clad hills and mountains, with deep intersecting gorges, rising to our right. On the slope of one of these we presently discerned the village of this man, whilst a flock of sheep belonging to him wandered about on a neighbouring hillside. As we drew near we were riding single file along a narrow path which was almost obliterated by newly-fallen snow. The two zabtiehs were leading in order with their stronger and less heavily laden animals to make steps in the snow in which the horses behind could tread. Suddenly, without any word or explanation they galloped off across the plain in a contrary direction to that in which we were travelling. and disappeared behind a hillock. I tried to follow, but my horse, having saddle-bags on, and being a poorly-fed, spiritless creature, this was impossible. I therefore returned to the path and rode ahead, in order to press down the newly-fallen snow so that the load horses might follow. As we passed near the village of the chief I

noticed a Koord wandering about at the foot of the hills looking for game or plunder. He was armed with a gun, and on seeing me made for the path and began to follow me. I urged my horse ahead, but the deep snow prevented it from making much progress. Looking round I saw that the Koord had gained the path and was only about four hundred yards behind. I knew that the custom of these men when they attacked a traveller on the road was to follow him until he reached a hollow or dip in the ground where their attack was less likely to be observed by others. On and on he came, I several times thought my horse would fall as I urged it forward through the deep, soft snow, whilst I was mentally deploring the fact that my back formed such a large target, and debating as to whether to return to the loads or to continue. Just then I heard, far away behind me, a shout, and looking round saw two men on the horizon. They proved to be the zabtiehs who, it would seem, God had caused to return and deliver me from my danger. On seeing them the Koord at once made off and I saw him no more. Observing that their shout had the desired effect these "protectors" galloped up in the bravest style possible under the circumstances, and though afterwards, when applying for backsheesh, one of them reminded me of the way in which he had shouted and saved me from the Koord, he never satisfactorily explained why he had left me.

At about five o'clock in the afternoon we left the lake shore, and skirting round a dangerous Koordish village in order to avoid it, ascended to a large plain. Our poor foot passenger, exhausted by walking in snow which was more than knee deep, and fearing to be left behind, bargained with one of the zabtiehs, paying him five piastres to allow him the use of his horse for the remainder of the journey. Neither road nor path could be seen on the plain we were traversing, and we had to let one of the

zabtiehs go ahead and guess, as nearly as possible, the direction of the Armenian village where we were to pass the night; but his horse soon got exhausted with the work of making deep holes in the snow as footholds, and another had to take the lead for a time. Neither tree nor village was in sight, and on every side there stretched a seemingly interminable, snowy waste. Then darkness began to creep across the plain, and we saw our chances of finding our destination rapidly diminish. There were frequent discussions amongst the men as to the direction in which our village lay, but it was evident that we were still some considerable distance from it. We appeared, so far as I was able to judge, to be moving in a W.S.W. direction, but, owing to the absence of any land-marks, it was impossible to make sure that we were not travelling round in a circle. Neither moon nor stars were visible by which to guide ourselves, the sky being covered with angry clouds, which grew more threatening as the darkness deepened. Evidently a storm was brewing, and in those regions the natives have cause to fear them, for not a winter passes without some of their number being caught and frozen to death in one of these dreaded outbursts, which quickly obliterate all paths and often last for several days.

We wandered along, the cold increasing as the night crept on apace. All eyes were eagerly strained in the vain hope of seeing a light, but, in whichever direction we looked, an endless tract of snow stretched away to the horizon. We were tired, disheartened, and hungry. For nearly twelve hours we had been in the saddle, and excepting for a few biscuits had had nothing to eat all day. Our horses had fared even worse, as we had not had time to wait and feed them, and they stopped occasionally to nibble at the snow.

The villages being built in a semi-subterranean fashion are, when snow is on the ground, very difficult to dis-

tinguish, and we feared that we might pass one without seeing it. To avoid this we stopped at intervals and united in a loud shout with the hope of attracting attention. The silent stillness of the desert seemed to mock us as we listened in vain for a reply to these signals of distress, and the only answer it sent back was the cold, keen wind, which sobbed around us and wailed out its warning of the approaching storm. One of the zabtiehs fired his gun, and from the fact that there was no response we knew that we were far from any human habitation, for the villagers are accustomed to such sounds and know it is a sign that some poor traveller has lost his way and wishes for a light to be shown. Matches were then struck and torches lighted, whilst, so far as the wind would permit of it, we searched for footprints in the snow. This proved to be useless, and our lights were soon exhausted. We seemed to have been cast into a world of our own where it was impossible to find a single trace of any other human soul.

As we slowly wended our way through the darkness an incident occurred which well illustrates the small regard which the Turks have for the Armenians. The zabtieh whose horse had been hired by our foot passenger, jumped up behind this man, and unceremoniously knocked him off into the snow. Presently Peter called my attention to the fact that he was missing. Evidently he had dropped exhausted and unless roused would fall asleep and be frozen to death. I halted the caravan and asked one or two to go back and look for him. Feeling stiff and cold, with a storm threatening, and with an icy chilliness in the air that seemed to render constant movement indispensable, the men grudged very much the time wasted over this delay. However the search party returned soon afterwards with the missing man, whom they had discovered lying in the snow. I saw him safely placed upon the horse he had paid for, but it was not long before

he was again knocked from it, and a little while later we found that he was missing. This time the Moslems were more angry at the delay, but I felt very much my responsibility to see that the man was not left to die, and insisted that we should wait. A search party went back and found him, but it was not long before we again discovered that he was not amongst us. This time when I halted, and asked the others to do so, the Moslems adopted a threatening attitude and said :—

“He is only an Armenian, if you send us back again we will shoot him and leave him in the snow.”

When he came up I put him in my saddle, hoping by this action to show that I was determined to protect him. I then walked, following behind the animals in order that I might utilize the footholds they had made in the trackless snow. Even so it was exhausting work, and I was extremely thankful, after the Armenian had rested, to mount my horse again.

At this juncture—when everything looked at its very blackest, when some of us, though not expressing it, were inwardly wondering who would be the next to fall, and what would happen when the enfeebled and hungry horses could bear up no longer—my mind went back to the homeland. I thought of kind friends I had left there, then I thought of my arm-chair critic on whom I had been persuaded to call ere leaving England. I saw him once more as I had seen him then, in his luxurious and brilliantly lighted home, surrounded, as it seemed to me, with all the comforts that heart could wish for, and his words, “You are going on a holiday trip,” which, though perhaps not meant unkindly, were, nevertheless, far from correct, came back and mocked me, and as I surveyed the dreary waste around, I wondered whether this was to be the end of the “holiday trip.” Yet although facing imminent peril I did not wish to change places with the one of whom I thought, for I had had the unspeakable joy

of comforting these down-trodden Armenians, and of leading many to a knowledge of Christ as their personal Saviour. So even if this was to be the end, I could go, rejoicing in the fact that I had died in harness.

Where will it end? Will a village never be reached? Are we travelling round and round in a circle? These and similar questions came into our minds repeatedly. Then something happened which I do not think I will ever forget. Peter pulled his horse abreast of mine and said: "We are indeed in a very dangerous condition; let us pray, Mr. Campbell." And riding slowly onwards through the soft, deep snow, chilled to the bone and with darkness all around us, we bent our heads and asked the God whom we were serving to direct our steps.

After that I turned to Peter and said, "Now let us have a praise meeting."

"Why?" he replied, "where is the village?"

"There are none in sight," I answered, "but when the Israelites marched around Jericho they shouted and praised before the walls fell, as a sign that they believed the answer was coming. Now that we have asked God to guide, let us praise him by faith for the answer which we believe is at hand."

We drew our horses close together again, and thanked God with our heads bowed that He had heard our prayer, and that we were not going to be frozen to death, but that He would guide us safely to the village.

The Moslems were quarrelling around us, and not without cause, for they were weary, cold and hungry, and mutually inclined to blame each other for having taken a wrong direction. Finally they called a halt and appeared to be considering the possibility of waiting there until morning, though they said that to do so would mean death to the animals if not to themselves. Whilst this discussion was proceeding some pieces of native bread were handed round to all, and eagerly devoured.

An exclamation from the zabtieh who had been leading and was slightly in advance, attracted the attention of all. Turning our eyes in the direction in which he was pointing we saw far away on the horizon a strange light, which remained only long enough to allow us to get a momentary glimpse of it. In a few seconds it reappeared, and after remaining for half a minute, finally vanished as suddenly as it had come, and we saw it no more.

This not only put new life into all the party, but caused at least one of those present to devoutly thank God for His faithfulness. Following in the direction of the place at which the light had appeared, we came, after some considerable time, to a well-beaten footpath through the snow. How gladly we hailed this sign of life: I think we could have almost knelt down and kissed the ground where we first saw this evidence of other men's existence. Our zabtiehs galloped ahead to prepare a fire and lodging for the night, at the village to which the pathway led, whilst I followed at a more leisurely pace with our exhausted load horses.

We were soon delighted to hear the barking of dogs and to see half-buried in the snow the low mud houses which told us that we had reached our desired haven. The zabtiehs met us outside the village and escorted us along its narrow street, defending us from the many dogs that yelped around us or barked angrily from the roofs on either side. The stable in which we were accommodated was dark and damp, but to me, that night, it seemed palatial. In the corner which had been railed off for human occupancy, there was a chimney, and we soon had a bright fire burning. There being no kettle in the village, water was put on the fire in an open iron vessel, the horses were given some food, and then, having made ready our beds for the night, Peter said:—

“Let us kneel down and thank God for having delivered us.”

On rising from our knees we sat down to a welcome meal of hot tea and some cold chicken, which we had brought with us, and discovered by conversing with the one or two natives present, that we were in the Armenian village for which we had started out.

Our zabtieh, whom I had invited to join us at our meal, informed us that, on arriving at the village they had found everyone asleep, and had had some difficulty in arousing the inhabitants.

Turning to those of them who were present I inquired "Who was it showed a light in this village, then?"

"No one showed a light," came the answer, "we have all been asleep for hours."

The zabtiehs were surprised and not a little puzzled. I fancy, however, that they knew we had been praying, and they saw us kneel down to thank God for our deliverance. Peter declared, and ever afterwards maintained, that the light we had seen had not been at the village at all but at the place where we had found the footpath, and that it was a miraculous light sent in answer to our petition. There were two reasons why I could never contradict this assertion, firstly, I could account for the light in no other way, and secondly, I believe God answers prayer and that it is as easy for the mighty Jehovah God to work a miracle to-day as it was nineteen hundred years ago. He is ever the same, the Lord God bountiful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy.

CHAPTER X

'TWIXT TURK AND TEMPEST

ON the morning following our miraculous escape we looked out of our stable to find that snow was falling fast, and that the threatened storm had not by any means spent its fury. Our surroundings reminded us of the Polar regions, but in spite of adverse elements we decided to continue the journey, as the prospect of being snowed up for several weeks in the stable allotted to us was by no means a pleasant one. The wind blew keenly in our faces, snow fell throughout almost the whole of the day and lay thickly on the path we travelled, yet we managed, as night was falling, to reach Aldjivas, our intended halting place, the population of which appeared to be entirely Moslem.

As we entered the town our zabtieh surprised me by an invitation to stay at his house for the night. Knowing that the man's home was in the place from which we had started, I was unable to understand this, and wondered whether he had been leading us round in a circle. The mystery was explained by Peter, who informed me that the man, having two wives, had also two homes. Evidently, in order to ensure domestic happiness, he kept his families as far apart as possible.

Once inside his house he was most obsequious in his attention to our wants. We were first supplied with a large dish of hot oil, on the top of which cooked eggs were floating; then our host proceeded to light the fire,

filling the room with such dense smoke that we had to lie on our faces to avoid suffocation. Later in the evening he provided us with a chicken, and we then retired for the night, several Moslems sleeping in the same room.

Next morning our zabtieh tried to play us a trick. Snow was falling and the sky was black, and this he made an excuse for absolutely declining to start unless I paid him thirty shillings. Though I refused this demand he remained firm, and it was only when I was on the point of starting to ask the local kymerkum for another protector that he reluctantly agreed to come, though with many threats that he would leave us on the way. He feared that if he came the roads might become blocked with snow and so delay his return, possibly also he had hoped, by detaining us for several days, to run up a big account for food. Angry at being compelled to start, he began to plot with the horse driver to throw down our goods at the roadside and leave us alone in the snow. In order to arrange things with this man he persistently fell behind, and I repeatedly ordered him to the front again. As he carried a gun and was a most unreliable character I did not feel safe with him behind me. Had these men deserted us we would have been in a most pitiable plight, and I think it was only in answer to prayer that they were kept from doing so.

The snow being too deep to allow of our travelling by the ordinary route, we followed the margin of the lake, but towards afternoon a new difficulty confronted us. A range of high hills, covered with trackless snow, ended with an abrupt precipice almost at the water's edge, and the lake, being too deep at this part for our horses to wade through it, we were obliged, as our only alternative, to force a passage through the snow which lay thickly on the hill sides. This proved to be of too great a depth to allow of riding; we had to dismount and lead our horses. The zabtieh and cartrijee (horse

driver) grumbled greatly, and finally demanded that I should return. On meeting with a refusal they threw down the loads and prepared to go back without me.

Just at this juncture, when things looked at their blackest, Peter, ever ready to invoke Divine assistance, asked that we might pray. So, standing in snow which reached almost to our waists, we prayed that God would overcome this difficulty for us, and had scarcely finished when one of the horses started off of its own accord over the mountains. It was impossible to overtake it easily, as being a saddle horse, it could move quickly. The men, reluctant as they were to continue the journey, were obliged to follow and did not capture the adventurous animal until we were safely across the mountains. We praised God for this answer to prayer, and continuing to travel by the margin of the lake arrived, tired and exhausted, at the district of Akhlat, and, observing some houses half buried in the snow, sought to obtain hospitality for the night. The community was entirely Mussulman, and refused accommodation. The zabtieh, as I afterwards discovered, thereupon informed them that I was a British consul, on hearing which their attitude changed, and I was led to a stable, a large dark gloomy-looking place, in the residential corner of which numbers of Moslems were seated. They treated me with a certain amount of respect until my zabtieh, after I was safely housed, told them that I was not a consul but a missionary. This information caused them to assume a very different aspect. The zabtieh, perhaps made bold by the presence of so many of his co-religionists, became openly insolent, and he finally went off and, leaving me unprotected, slept in some other place.

It became evident in the morning that both he and the driver of the horses had decided to desert us at this place, in order that they might return before the road which we had opened was blocked by more snow. With great

difficulty I persuaded them to start, but the zabtieh grumbled all the way along, sometimes threatening to leave us if I did not comply with his requests for money, and after going for about five miles disappeared for a time and returned without either horse or weapon.

"What use are you without a gun?" I queried.

"All the inhabitants of this district are Armenians, so it is quite safe," he replied, a statement by no means true, but being anxious to reach the village of Aghagh before Sunday in order to take services there, I did not delay by sending him back for it. A short distance farther on, at the village of Karabash, it became evident that the deep snow would prevent our continuing the journey by horse-back. Its inhabitants who, like most others in that country, place little value on time, invited me to stay a few days with them, but fearing that the roads might become entirely blocked, I decided to press on to a village at which I could rely on finding some hand sleds. The only way to reach it was by walking. I therefore paid off my horse driver and hired a number of Armenians to carry my loads on their backs. The zabtieh here finally deserted me, refusing to go a step farther, and I was very glad to be rid of his company.

I was alone with Armenians, a rather unusual occurrence when travelling in Turkey, and the men, fearing that one of the dreaded snow storms might overtake us, urged one another forward at the quickest possible pace. Snow, which had been falling lightly when we started, now came down with blinding fury, and a keen, biting wind began to blow, its cold severity piercing one to the bone. After a half-hour's trudging we were glad to take shelter in a deserted mill house on the mountain side, and to have a piece of bread and a draught of a heating native drink made partly from molasses.

Forging ahead again, it was not long before we found that our path, which, in starting, had been trodden to a

depth of about two feet below the surface of the snow, was entirely obliterated. Progress became very slow, the leader, as he carried no load himself, had to go in front with a stick and press the snow down into hard footsteps, in which it was safe for those behind him to tread, otherwise they sank below their waists and over-balanced. The snow and the cold increased, and our prospects were far from cheerful. We were on a bleak mountain side, almost waist deep in snow, with a blinding storm raging around us which prevented us seeing more than a few feet ahead, whilst at the same time we had no means of knowing in which direction we ought to proceed. The men asked me to fire my pistol, in the hope that someone, hearing the sound, might come to our rescue, but I did not possess such a weapon. It was a strange procession, the carriers, advancing only a few steps at a time, were terribly cold and often only their heads and shoulders visible above the snow. I followed them, and Peter, clad in my waterproof and tearfully bemoaning the fact that he had to part from me at the next village, brought up the rear. Fearing the worst, he again asked that we might join in prayer for guidance, and as we tramped onwards we asked the Lord to undertake and to deliver us.

After wandering about for several hours we were overjoyed to hear the barking of dogs, which told us that we were nearing a village. It proved to be a Christian one, but somewhat to my astonishment none of the residents would receive us into their dwellings. This was not from any lack of hospitality, but because of the knowledge that after I had gone the authorities would probably punish them very severely on suspicion of having harboured a revolutionist. At last, under pressure brought to bear by the leader, they housed, or rather stabled us in the best building which the village provided, and which contained a number of animals. As we were all wet through, one of the first things to be done was to change

into dry clothing, and this had to be performed before the gaze of those who had come to the stable to look at me. We were soon, however, enjoying our evening repast, which helped us to forget the discomforts of the day.

I was just congratulating myself on having escaped the attentions of the zabtieh when a policeman walked in and glaring angrily at me, demanded to know why I had not called on the kymerkum at Akhlat. I informed him that, having had a zabtieh with me, I did not require to do so, an explanation with which he was not satisfied. He then presented me with a letter from this official, couched in most polite French language, inviting me to go back and spend a few days with him ; but fearing that this was a subterfuge for detaining me whilst inquiries were being made as to my designs, I declined with thanks. As soon as the storm abated, the policeman, who himself remained in the stable to watch me, forced an Armenian to carry my reply to the kymerkum, and this official then sent a couple of zabtiehs with a letter informing me that they had come "to ensure my comfort and repose." This they did by not letting me out of their sight for a moment, and whilst they were employed in watching me the policeman held an inquisition in the village in order to ascertain who had led me to the particular stable in which I was residing, who had supplied me with food, and whether any had been to see me with regard to political matters, intending, I doubt not, to punish them as soon as I had left the place.

The zabtieh, under whose care Peter should have returned, having deserted me, I considered that as he had no passport it would be unsafe to let him leave me. If he attempted to go back alone he would undoubtedly fall into the clutches of the kymerkum and probably be imprisoned. I therefore wrote out a telegram to Dr. Raynolds, explaining that I was taking him on to Bitlis, and one of the zabtiehs was despatched with a letter to

the kymerkum requesting that the telegram should be sent, the money for which had been given to the bearer of the message. I may say that this telegram was never received by Dr. Raynolds, and what became of the money I never discovered. The incident is a good example of the way in which things are *not* done in Turkey.

Hoping that the roads and the weather might improve, I stayed for several days in this village, and whilst in it saw an instance of the annoyance which is caused to the Armenians by the soldiery. A day or two after my arrival a party of foot soldiers entered the place. They had come from Moosh, and each one before leaving that place had commandeered an Armenian, whom he compelled to carry his load without payment. When they reached the village in which I was staying, these twenty or thirty soldiers, as is customary, compelled its inhabitants to feed them free of charge, ruthlessly killing the chickens of the poverty-stricken people, and the following morning, having devoured most of the eatables in the village, they employed themselves by hunting for a fresh batch of slaves to carry their loads to another town. One or two of them rudely burst into my stable, and as there were a few Armenians there, ordered them out for this purpose.

"The English Bey has already engaged us to transport his baggage," they answered, whereupon the soldiers went sulkily away to search for other victims.

I was now in the unpleasant position of being regarded as a spy, and numerous attempts were made by my three "protectors" to pump information from Peter. Amongst other things they asked him whether I was paid by the British nation, and on receiving a reply in the negative showed little inclination to believe it, saying, when told that I was doing missionary work, "We do not believe it; a missionary never travels as much as this man."

"Has he given any money to the men who carried his loads?" they inquired.

"Yes, of course he has," answered Peter.

"Ah!" said they, apparently thinking that they had discovered evidence that I was giving aid to revolutionary propaganda, and that, like themselves, I ought to make the Armenians work without payment, "what has he done that for?"

"Because the Bey does not make people work for him for nothing," was the unexpected rejoinder, to which they could make no reply.

The people here were very poor, but it was impossible to give them any help without arousing the suspicions of the ever watchful Turk. The only way in which I could assist was by purchasing all the old coins in the place at a fictitious value.

A few days later I arrived, still attended by my three "protectors," at the village of Aghagh, where the hand sleds were. Knowing that there was a native pastor in the place I inquired for him and was told he was in the church. Through the snow I tramped to the little mud-plastered and flat-roofed building dignified by this name. It looked much more like a tiny schoolroom than a church. Its interior was filled with village children, who, squatting on the floor, were being instructed by one who filled the double office of teacher and pastor. This individual, on seeing me, dismissed the school, as the building in which it was being conducted was the only one in which I could stay. One of the zabtiehs followed me inside and, sitting down beside the altar rail, took out a cigarette, lighted it, and commenced to smoke. I was determined to have a little privacy, so telling him that the church had been built for prayer, not for smoking, ordered him away so effectively that he was afraid to speak to, or come near, me for the next two days.

One of the first things learnt on my unexpected arrival

in this village was that an order had been issued for the arrest of its pastor, his only crime being that he was seeking to enlighten his people by teaching a school. Soldiers had that day gone to a neighbouring village and arrested its preacher for a similar offence and were hourly expected in the place where I was. Yet I had found the teacher, with full knowledge of his fate, sticking to his duty with bravery and devotion. The thought that he might languish for months in some dark, damp dungeon made me determine to prevent his arrest when the soldiers arrived. I asked him therefore to bring his bedding, live and sleep in the church, and keep within sight of me, so that they could not take him without my knowledge.

The soldiers arrived in the village next morning, accompanied by the pastor already captured. Armed with guns, they came to the little church to arrest the one whom I was sheltering. They entered the building, but I placed the man they wanted behind the altar rail and refused to let them have him. Nonplussed at the strange turn which events had taken, they spent some time in discussion and then went away without him.

The arrest of preachers on frivolous pretexts is certainly not in accordance with Turkey's pledge "to introduce necessary reforms," and I therefore called together a few villagers and discussed the advisability of attempting the rescue of the other preacher who was held as a prisoner by the soldiers, but it was thought to be, on the whole, inadvisable to embark on such a course, therefore whilst I was able to fling the protecting arm of Britain over one intended victim, I was obliged to let the soldiers depart with the other.

It is easy to read of these things in cold, printed type ; one must be amidst the sufferers in the villages to understand what it means, and to feel it in such a way as to enter into it fully. Here was a preacher being marched

off to an unwholesome dungeon for doing his duty faithfully and well, perhaps to wait for weeks or months without a trial; yet this was nothing singular, it was an everyday occurrence, one of the things that are always going on.

That afternoon I conducted a service in the little church. The village, because it contained this building, which had been erected by American missionaries, was regarded by Moslems as being a Protestant one, and, on that account, made the special object of their annoyance. By the Turks its inhabitants had been greatly over-taxed, and were consequently many liras in debt, whilst the Koords made a habit of plundering it every year, tauntingly saying when they did so:—

“Why does not England come and help you? As long as you are Christian your condition will remain like this.”

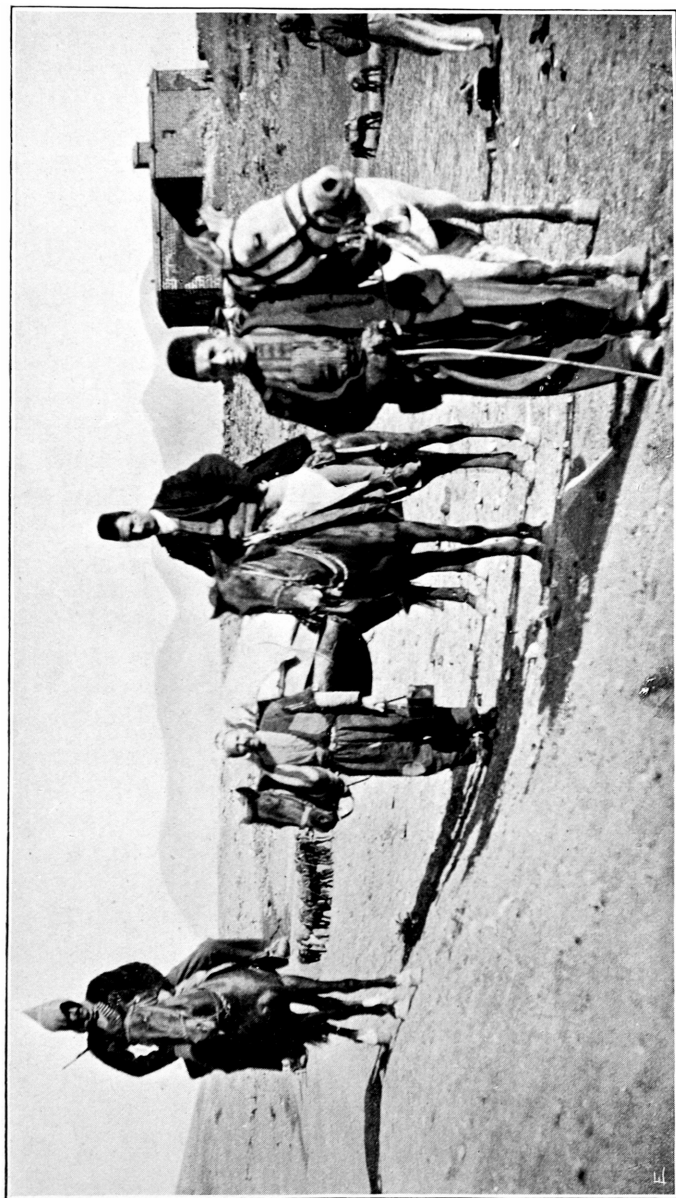
Knowing these things I hardly expected to see anyone arrive in response to the sound of the gong which was beaten in the village to call the people to church. Yet it seemed, when I stood up to speak, as if all its inhabitants had flocked into the little building. The church was crowded to the doors, and I spoke to them for half an hour whilst they listened most intently. They sent up a request that I would speak to them on the sufferings of Christ, a subject which is always dear to the minds of these down-trodden peoples. But as I stood there, with that sea of suffering humanity gazing up at me with looks which seemed to come from broken hearts and crushed and bleeding lives, I asked myself the question: How can I speak to you on suffering, when you know so much more than myself of what it is to suffer for the sake of Christ? I expected that they would probably have to suffer as soon as I had left the village for having come to hear me preach, and, though I paid my zabtiehs well in the hope that they would not annoy these people, I afterwards heard on good authority that the villagers were punished for having listened to me that day.

The hand sleds with which we travelled from this village to Bitlis have shafts like the handle of a mail cart, and are constructed in a very light manner so that they can be drawn by two men over the crust which forms on top of the snow, without breaking through it. The utmost that such a conveyance can accommodate is one passenger. I found the position very cramped, and sometimes preferred to get out and walk. I wore the cowhide shoe used by the natives, and found they possessed many advantages over boots when marching through snow. The journey to Bitlis passed without much incident. At one large village where we stopped for food, and in which scores of Armenians had at one time resided, I found only a mere handful, many of the houses once occupied being perfectly empty.

In addition to Peter I had with me the preacher whom I rescued from prison. After passing a night at Tadvan, situated on the shores of Lake Van, we struck across the bleak plain on which stands the large stone structure known as the Persian Khan, which has doubtless given shelter to thousands who have sought refuge in it from the fatal snow storms which sweep over these districts in winter. Mount Nimrud, an extinct volcano with a crater five miles in diameter, rises at one end of this plain. In this region the snow was deeper than I have ever seen it elsewhere. The heads of the telegraph poles were visible but the wires were buried. Whilst passing through the dangerous gorge which leads from this plain to the town of Bitlis, Peter, who was walking ahead of our cavalcade, sought to pass on the narrow footpath through the snow, a Koordish lad, who, with his two Armenian servants, was proceeding in the same direction.

"Don't attempt to pass me," said the Koord, "you are an Armenian and must walk behind."

Had I not had a zabtieh with me we should have been compelled by this young upstart to delay our journey and



A MISSIONARY'S TOURING TRAIN.

The baggage horse is held by a servant : the building on the right hand side of picture is the Persian Khan : the zabtieh (mounted) is on the left, and in the background the extinct volcano—Mount Nimrud.

remain behind him all the way, but the zabtieh, being a Moslem, forced him to give way and we went ahead. Not long afterwards, on looking round for the sleds on which my luggage was packed, I found that they were not in sight. The Koord, not knowing that they belonged to me, was coolly sitting on top of my luggage forcing the Armenians to give him a free ride. Had the baggage been the property of the Armenians, they would doubtless have been forced to pull this young Koord all the way to town. On one side of our path there was a precipice of about twenty feet, with a soft snow drift at the bottom, and as I thought of this man's insolence and of the sufferings that my fellow Christians had endured at the hands of his race, a strong temptation came over me to teach him a salutary lesson by leaning up against him from the side furthest from the precipice, but I remembered the work to which I had been called, and I think Peter divined my thoughts for, warning me that the man was well armed, he drew me away.

At a little stone house outside Bitlis we were stopped and our passports were demanded. To let the officials know that Peter had none would have resulted almost certainly in his being cast into prison, besides bringing suspicion upon myself. I explained that it was too cold for me to stop and show my papers then, but that if they would send up to the mission premises on the following day I would let them have what they desired. This would give me time to see the British Consul in the town, who could explain matters to the Vali and obtain a paper for Peter. The Turks looked doubtfully at me at first, then they evidently came to the conclusion that I was someone of great importance, for they allowed me to pass on.

CHAPTER XI

A TOWN OF TERROR

WITH its centre and its markets nestling in the hollow formed by the confluence of many valleys, and its more important dwellings surmounting the steep declivities which surround this basin, Bitlis has been well described as "The city of more than seven hills." But if political considerations be taken into account, it would be better described as the city of more than seven ills, for in no town that I visited did I find the people living in such constant dread of massacre, and fear of the Turk, as in this beautifully situated and well-sheltered city.

It is smaller, and more compactly built, than Van, and its Christian quarter not so distinctive, perhaps due to the fact that here the Moslem population is almost double the Armenian, of which nationality there are about twelve thousand in the town. Up to about seventy years ago it was ruled by a semi-independent Koordish chief, who also exercised authority over the surrounding districts, the town of Van being included in the territory over which he held sway. It is now, however, entirely in the hands of the Turks, and has had a succession of Valis who have governed it with extreme rigour and harshness towards the Christians.

The American mission station and British Consulate are situated on one of the eminences which overlook the town, and close to them are many of the houses of the

Armenians, which, however, have several barracks, full of Turkish soldiers, interspersed amongst them.

Over thirty years ago, two American ladies having means at their disposal, were travelling for pleasure on the Continent, visiting various cities, and spending some time in each. On a certain day, whilst making a voyage, they met on the vessel a missionary from Bitlis, who so interested them in the work which was being done there and so aroused their sympathy for the need of its people, that they decided to devote their lives to labour for their welfare.

With these ladies—the Misses Ely—I had the pleasure of staying whilst in this town. There is no mission compound, merely two houses adjoining the Church, one of them being inhabited by Mr. and Mrs. Cole, who, after a lifetime of devoted service, intend leaving during the present year.

The Misses Ely, in addition to caring for a number of orphan girls, amongst whom I had services, do a good amount of touring, visiting and encouraging the people in the villages. On one occasion, whilst engaged in this work, Miss Ely became separated from her baggage animals, and whilst waiting for them at the appointed stopping-place, in which no beds could be found, she sat down on the hard floor and rested against her saddle. Overcome by fatigue, she fell asleep. She awoke about midnight, and was startled by the fact that her straw hat, which she had kept on, was apparently being pulled off. Obtaining a light she discovered that the cause of her alarm was a forlorn donkey, who had nibbled at the tempting straw until only half the hat remained. As it was several months before it could be replaced, this little experience was more amusing than convenient.

That the work of the missionaries is appreciated by those for whom they labour is well shown in the following letter, of which I give a literal translation, and which

was recently sent to the Misses Ely by one of their former pupils :—

“ Self denying benefactors in Christ :

“ Most noble friends,

“ Esteeming school privileges a suitable occasion, I desire to send my imperfect letter to you. My object is none other than to express my sincere love and gratitude.

“ Oh ! estimable ones ! what shall I say ? and what shall I recompense to you for your self-denials and love ? Praise to our Heavenly Father, who, when our nation was groping in darkness, looked with loving eyes and directed a beam of mercy upon us and caused help to reach us from afar and unexpected places, for which we are in no wise worthy. I doubt not that your ceaseless efforts and toil will be crowned with joy.

“ Oh ! poor Armenia did in no manner recognize her need until you became an antidote to her deathly condition. Ah ; stretch out your hands to my afflicted nation oh, thou ! like Moses and Aaron ; for still we fear, lest because of our ingratitude and unfaithfulness we sink in the Red Sea. We and our nation are to-day indebted to recognize you Americans as our light givers and grace givers by the favour of God. Be pleased to pray for us that we may use the gifts and privileges we have received for the good of our nation and humanity. If the Lord is pleased to give it to me, I desire to have a part in working in His vineyard. My present desire is that God bless and reward you.”

During my stay in Bitlis, I was able to hold about fifty services, and I have before me, as I write, many letters testifying to blessing received at these meetings.

One case I specially remember—an Armenian young man, who acted as cook in the house where I was staying. He followed me into my room one night and said :

"I have been coming to the services, and now I want to give my life to Christ."

I explained to him the way of salvation, then after we had had some prayer and he had received the assurance that his sins were forgiven, he went away.

A few nights afterwards, when I retired to my room, he followed me into it; I turned to him, wondering what was wrong. "I have come to thank you," he said, "for I have got such great joy since making that decision."

I told him I was glad to hear of this, and after further conversation, he left the room, but several days later again followed me into it, and said:

"I have got such great joy since knowing that my sins are forgiven, I do not know how to thank God sufficiently, so feel I must come and thank you again."

I said I could not help him, as if he did not know how to thank God enough, I was in the same difficulty, and after we had praised God together, he returned to his kitchen and his duties.

This incident is one of many which serve to show that the Armenians appreciate efforts made for their spiritual welfare. That they are also conscientious in seeking to put right wrongs they have committed, I had many evidences, one of which is the following extract from a letter sent me by a Bitlis missionary shortly after I had left the town:

"You will be glad to hear that the interest among our dear girls appears deepening. There are quite a number, whose earnest consistent walk gives good evidence of their having really given their hearts to the Saviour at the time you were here and as a fruit of your preaching. To-day several beautiful notes have been sent in—some speaking of broken rules, etc., etc., others notes of gratitude."

A dark cloud of suspicion and fear of an impending massacre hung with depressing influence over the town

of Bitlis during the whole of my stay. It was expected that every hour would herald the commencement of the dreaded carnage. On a memorable Saturday those Turks who had friends or partners amongst the Armenians, secretly warned them not to go to the markets that day. Soon the news of this spread; and terrified Christians came flocking to the mission premises.

I stood at the window and watched them as, standing in little groups in the deep snow which covered the playground of the orphanage, they waited in fear and trembling, for the howling of dogs and the shrieks of the women, which would tell them that the awful work had started. Many, not even stopping to close their shops, had fled in terror from the market place, some going to their homes to comfort their wives and families, whilst others came to the mission station. One or two sadly brought some little trinket or valuable to the missionaries, asking them to guard it for them, but there was no word of resistance and none were armed.

Fortunately, on this occasion, owing partly perhaps to the fact that the snow was so deep as to prevent the Koords from entering the town, the massacre was averted, and ere evening fell, the Armenians returned to the town. Those who have lived long in the country say, that the worst part of a massacre is not the actual event, but the weary months which precede it, during which the people live in fear of its commencing at any moment. Throughout my stay, the spirit of the town was certainly most depressing, and it was quite a relief to wander away from its precincts, for a walk through the snow-covered gorges which surround it.

One night firing was heard on the missionary premises. Some robbers, emboldened on account of the disfavour shown towards the Christians by the Government, had attempted to enter the premises, and being disturbed by a servant, fired some shots at him ere they retreated.

Another night, I was disturbed by a great noise in the street, and getting out of bed, looked out of the window to see a torchlight procession wending its way along the snow-covered lane which ran past the premises, stringed instruments played by the men, together with the beating of drums, sending forth a weird melody into the still, cold air. It was part of the ceremony of an Armenian wedding, which in this town sometimes takes place at night, but which in Van and other places I have seen during the day-time. The customs observed at such times vary somewhat in different localities, but I give here a general description of them.

The wedding occupies a considerable period of time, and some of the observances are doubtless the outcome of the environment in which the Christians live. An instance of this is the close veiling of the bride, who, because Koords have frequently carried off beautiful girls when they went to the church to get married, has her face entirely hidden behind a thick veil.

It is not customary for a man to choose his wife; nor does he see or speak to her until after the marriage, unless perchance he is able to say a few words at the time of the engagement. She is chosen for him by his relatives, and more often than not by his mother. As the bride will probably have to reside for most of her married life with this lady, it is most important that she should meet with her approval.

Engagements have to receive the sanction of the civil and religious heads of the Armenian community, which, however, can be obtained without the presence of the contracting parties.

The parents of the bride are considered to be the losers by the marriage; they adopt an attitude akin to that of mourners, and the bridegroom often has to pay to his prospective father-in-law a dowry in the form of cattle, produce, or money. On this point, however, the custom

varies in different localities. At a wedding at which I was present at Van, the bride provided her own outfit with the exception of the shoes, these being brought to her by the groom when he came to escort her to the church.

On the day of the marriage ceremony a number of women go to the bride's house to prepare her; and friends of the groom go for a similar purpose to his house. He is supposed to be found in old clothes which he is made to change, a special barber is brought to shave him, he is then dressed in a better suit, and in company with his friends goes to his bride's house to take her away. An unmarried friend acts as best man and body-guard to the groom during the whole time of the wedding, accompanying him to the church and carrying a stout stick as a symbol of protection. In a similar way, an unmarried man, who during the ceremony is called "the brother of the bride" walks beside her. She may also have a woman to act as bridesmaid.

When all are assembled at her father's house, tea and Turkish delight are usually served; and, if so desired, half of the religious ceremony may be performed there. The groom then takes the bride, closely veiled, to the church, and after the usual prayers, the heads of the two about to be united are brought together in front of the altar, the priest as he blesses them lays a cross upon them, resting it partly on either head; they then join hands, and the religious part of the ceremony is complete.

After leaving the church, the newly-wed couple, and the guests, proceed to the house of the bridegroom's father, where the festivities may continue for two or three days, enlivened during the greater part of the time by the beating of drums, the playing of stringed instruments and impromptu dances by the men. Then comes the last ceremony which is known as "tying up the bride's face."

Before marriage, girls usually wear a kerchief loosely over their head, but those who are wedded are obliged, when in a mixed company or in the streets, to have the lower part of the face, from the nose downwards, covered by this kerchief. When alone with other women, they usually drop this covering, but on hearing a step, pull it up. It is rather an awkward custom, as, when a stranger approaches and a woman has both her hands occupied with work, she is obliged to free one in order to readjust the kerchief. I have sometimes seen them overcome this difficulty by holding it between their lips. The wedding ceremony being completed by the tying up of this kerchief, the guests depart, and as the patriarchal system of living largely prevails—sometimes seventy living under one roof—the bride remains with her husband in his father's house, where she is very much under the control of her mother-in-law, and also of that lady's daughters, should she have any. Though kindly treated, the latest bride to enter a family is regarded as the servant of the household, and for this reason is very glad when, through another son getting married, she obtains her promotion.

A married woman on being taken to her new home must not, for years, speak above a whisper. She is not generally allowed to speak to her husband's father, nor, unless they are very young, to her brothers-in-law. She may not ask them questions, and if addressed by them must, whenever possible, answer by gesture. When visiting at her father's house, she may speak to her brothers, or perhaps to very near male relatives, but excepting for this, she is almost entirely precluded from speaking to any man except her husband.

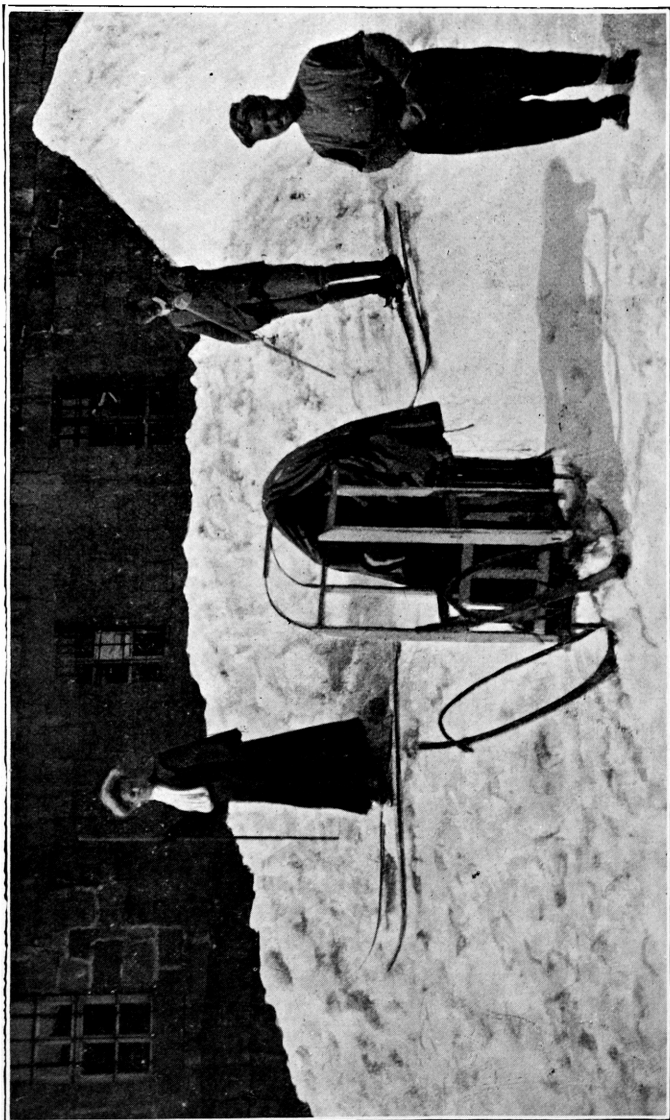
For some years after marriage, she must not speak above a whisper, a regulation which sometimes renders missionary work rather difficult. A young wife comes to see the doctor, but her replies to his questions being

inaudible to him, her mother-in-law has to repeat them in a louder voice.

Ere leaving Bitlis I received some tokens of the liberality of these people, who are so often accused of being mercenary. I remember one woman, a servant, who had been helped and blessed in the services, sending me of her own accord her week's wages as a thank-offering. Knowing the poverty of these people, it was not always easy to accept such gifts. A week later, this woman again sent her wages for the same purpose, a touching evidence of the way in which God, by His Holy Spirit, had been working in her heart.

Were one to believe all the reports of danger that are spread in Turkey, travel would be an impossibility. When about to start, a rumour that Koordish tribes were engaged in warfare on the road I had to traverse was brought in, and I was begged to delay my departure. In addition I was told of danger from avalanches, which at that season, loosened by the warmth of an advancing spring, were rushing at terrific speed down the mountain sides on to the caravan road which ran at their base. I felt, however, that the Lord would have me move onwards and therefore decided to leave.

It was hard work to say good-bye to Peter, who by his faithfulness and devotion had endeared himself to me. If he is a representative sample of the orphans trained by American missionaries, they are, in the rearing of such children, doing a grand and noble work. I believe the one who has borne the expense of this young man's support and education is a German pastor. He is to be congratulated on the excellent return he has for his money. Not only has he the prayers of this young evangelist on his behalf, for all these orphans pray for their "benefactors," but he has been the means of saving one life from possible misery or starvation, and by the small outlay of a few pounds a year required for the support of an orphan,



A HAND SLED AT BITLIS.

This picture was taken outside the house occupied by the Misses Ely. The building is about twenty-five feet high but snow conceals the first story. The lady in the sled is Miss Mary Ely, who does her winter Missionary touring work in this vehicle.

has furnished Turkey with an earnest and devoted young preacher, whose life is an influence for good wherever he goes.

Poor Peter! after all he was only an Armenian, and therefore just as liable as others to annoyance from the Turk. In order to save him from trouble on the road, it was arranged that he should return to Van by boat. After pitching about on the lake for ten days, the vessel he was in arrived at the little port, one mile from that city, but no sooner had Peter landed, than, although provided with a paper from the Bitlis Vali to ensure his safety, he was promptly arrested and cast into prison without any apparent reason. The ways of the Turk are past finding out. His release was subsequently secured through the intervention of others.

When I left Bitlis the snow lying in the streets was from twenty-five to thirty feet in depth. One of the missionaries who measured the fall of snow that winter found it to be over seventeen and a half feet; the extra in the streets is accounted for by the fact that the accumulation on the roofs is swept into them. The British Consul very kindly arranged for his cavass to escort me as far as Sert, two days' journey distant. He came himself to see me off, and the manly "God bless you" that he shouted after me has followed me ever since.

Our road at first lay along the narrow and beautiful valley of the Bitlis river, and as a thaw had set in, loosening many of the rocks on the mountain side, we were in constant danger from falling stones. Fortunately no avalanches came down, though we passed over several that had descended a few days previously. As we rode over one of these we were told that a hundred feet below us buried in the snow were the bodies of four mules which, passing along the road, had been caught ere they could escape. Amongst the rocks by the roadside I noticed some very fine specimens of red marble.

It would be tedious to recount all the incidents of the journey. Suffice it to say that we passed the night at a caravanserai, the first met with in Turkey, and on the evening of the following day arrived at Sert, an Arabic-speaking town. Having descended over two thousand feet since leaving Bitlis, we found ourselves in an entirely different climate, the only snow visible being that on the high mountains to the north.

There are many things which I saw and heard amongst Armenians which it would not be wise to record in their proper sequence. As, however, I was now, for a time, working amongst Syrians, I will, before passing on to describe further experiences of work and travel, insert here two chapters in which I have collated some of these.

CHAPTER XII

THE WOES OF THE WOMEN

I WAS seated one day in the house of an Armenian, with whom I had been invited to spend the afternoon and evening.

The room was nicely furnished, a brazier in the centre containing some red hot charcoal, made up for the absence of a fire, whilst some incense which had been placed on top of it gave a faint perfume to the air.

My host had invited several friends to meet me. Soon the shuffling of feet was heard outside the door, then flop—flop—made by somebody's shoes being dropped off, and an Armenian entered, to be followed shortly afterwards by several more, who swelled our numbers to eight or nine. The men amongst whom I found myself were some of the leaders of the Armenian community, sedate and thoughtful, dressed in the long coats and thick woollen socks worn by their race.

After refreshments had been served conversation began to flow, and as their tongues loosened the subject turned, as it naturally does, to the trouble caused them by the Government. One of them, who was a shopkeeper, told of a Turk living in the town who owed him, for goods supplied, sixty Turkish pounds, which he was quite unable to recover. When charged with it in public the man denied the debt, though he admitted it in private. Not only was the money unobtainable, the Turk was ordering more goods, which the poor Armenian was obliged, in

order to avoid trouble, to supply. This instance shows how cruelly the want of equality at law tells against the Christians.

Then other stories were told, tales of cruelty and bloodshed, for it is the custom of these oppressed peoples, in their hours of leisure, to recount their hardships and mutually sympathise with one another. It would be impossible to recount all of these, but I will give a few which passed around the circle that evening which, though it is only one of many spent in this way, is graven on my mind because of the visit to us of a terrified priest.

One Armenian, as he sat cross-legged on the floor, told of two Christians, whom he knew, who escaped to Russia, and after building up another home, wrote to their wives to try and join them. These women started off through the mountains, but were caught by Turkish soldiers, and for two years had been passed from barrack to barrack that the Turks might wreak their will upon them, then, with hope gone and hearts broken, released.

It is comparatively easy to read of such things. Do you realise what they mean? Can you understand the black despair, void of all hope, which settles on the life of an Armenian woman when robbed of honour, which is valued more than life? Do you wonder that, instead of being bright, joyous, and purposeful, she has become, through the wrecking of purity and principle, mere driftwood on the sea of life—an aimless inert mass of murdered hopes? Is it surprising that she should long for death, as a welcome release which is all too long in coming, or that her husband or father should reflect that hopelessness which the ruin of a loved one has laid at the door of his soul?

Like corpse within some living tomb,

All hope of succour gone,

Their souls lie down in death's dark gloom,

Their bodies still live on.

Another story tells of a party of Christians, who tried to cross the frontier into Russia. Gathering together the few little articles that spell home to an Armenian, they paid a heavy sum of money to a number of Koords who, in return for this, promised to escort them safely over the frontier, and protect them on the journey. It was their only way of escaping from conditions worse than death. The Koords led them through the mountains almost to the frontier, and, when their land of promise was in sight and they began to breathe an air of liberty and to look forward to meeting relatives and friends in Russia, they were taken to a valley and cruelly murdered by the men to whom they had paid the money.

But as we sit listening and the evening shadows fall on the landscape outside, a sudden disturbance occurs, the door is flung open, and a terrified priest with face aghast and hair dishevelled, bursts into the room. He appears to have lost his senses and behaves so strangely as he sits on the floor, huddled up in a corner, and muttering incoherent words that, after awhile, I turn to an Armenian beside me and whisper the inquiry, "Is he drunk?" yet wondering myself at such a question, for I have never seen anyone intoxicated in this land.

"No, oh no," is the reply, "he has seen something terrible in his village, and has fled here for safety. He will tell us presently."

The man sits sullen and morose in the corner for a time, like one in a terrible nightmare from which there is no awakening, then, bit by bit, his story is drawn from him.

The Koords have been to his village, and, for the fifth time, have broken down the church doors and taken them away for firewood. Worse than that, they have carried off some of the beautiful young girls from their homes, "my daughters," he calls them, as he wrings his hands in agony, for these village priests are the fathers of their people.

Looks are cast at me by one or two in the room, significant looks, I know what they mean. I am a British subject, and, though my friends are too polite to voice the question that is at the back of their minds, I know it is there, for I have heard it many times before: "Why does England leave us in this condition?"

I can only shift uneasily in my seat, and hope that they will not ask me, for it is an interrogation to which I can give no satisfactory answer.

They seek to comfort the heart-broken priest who, clad in sombre black and still wearing his head-gear, sits mournfully on the ground, his white pallid face, convulsed occasionally with the hysteria of heart-felt agony. A tray of food is placed before him, then he rouses himself, says the Armenian blessing—which is as long as the Lord's Prayer—and takes a little nourishment, though stopping at intervals, as his soul is wrung afresh by the thought of what those, whom he calls his daughters, may be passing through.

Other stories follow, some about basest treachery, others of the separation of families never to meet again on earth, of happy homes ruined, and of women whose lives have been spoilt. These are not told to me, for I am not always listening, but to one another, for they seek mutual sympathy. At my request, however, the young man, who has told of his difficulty in recovering a debt, relates his experiences of the great massacre in the town of —. "We were all afraid that some terrible slaughter might commence, but the Vali informed us that a telegram had come from the Sultan saying that the Armenians were to be protected, and that if any had grievances they would be put right. In thankfulness, and as a sign of their loyalty, all Christians were ordered to gather in the market-place unarmed, at a certain hour, to pray for the Sultan. Full of thankfulness we all went there, then suddenly soldiers came, blocked all the approaches, and,

at a given signal, fell upon us with their swords. I, with a friend, managed to escape. He had an acquaintance amongst the Turks, whom he had helped and started in business. He fled to this man, who said, "Oh, yes, I will look after you." During that day he remained in the Moslem's house, and was hospitably treated. Next morning his host said, "Let us go for a walk," promising to protect him, should any danger occur. After they had gone a short distance down the road the Turk shot the man for whose safety he had made himself responsible."

They laugh at some of the stories, they are so ludicrous in their injustice. A man passing through a village has been stopped by Turks. "Give me twelve medjidies" (about forty-five shillings), they said.

"Why?" he asked.

"Don't say 'why' only give," was the answer, and he was obliged to pay.

Another Armenian, who owned three farms, was stopped by a Koord, who said "You must give me your farms."

"Why do you demand them?" asked the Armenian.

"They belonged to my father," answered the Koord, whereupon the man whom he was trying to defraud, suggested that they should go to law about it.

"No," said the brigand, "my law is my gun," and with these words he fired at the Armenian, who escaped uninjured but wandered in the fields afraid to show himself during the day-time. He eventually returned home, but the Koord appeared at his house one day, and he fled for safety. Then the Koord sent a message saying, "If you don't give, behold your wife and girls are here. I will take them and kill your boys." In this case a missionary interfered and the Vali imprisoned the man.

"In the village of —," said another, "where the Armenians are made to keep and feed the sheep of a Koordish chief, this man lent a Christian one lira for

tribute. In two years the interest on this had increased the debt to ten liras, and the man, being unable to pay, the Koord took a farm instead, and now gathers the hay from it."

"Last autumn," says another, "in this man's village," indicating one who was present, "the Koords made a hole through a wall in order to carry off a beautiful young wife, but their attempt was unsuccessful."

I need hardly say that I was glad when this evening passed away. The priest who, though he remained silent, seemed to have recovered somewhat, took his departure, and soon afterwards I followed him into the cold night air.

It may appear strange to some, that these people should occasionally laugh over their misfortunes, but ludicrous mistakes, the result of ignorance, are by no means uncommon amongst Turkish officials. It is a cause for thankfulness that the number of enlightened and educated men is on the increase, but there still exist a good many of the old school, who, on account of their lack of knowledge of common things, act with great intolerance.

They are especially ignorant with regard to the word "committee," which they almost invariably interpret as having reference to revolutionary propaganda. A few years ago a party of missionaries were, on entering the country, detained on suspicion at an inland town for some days, because one of their number had received a telegram in which a relief committee was referred to.

A fine young preacher whom I met when in Turkey, after doing a splendid work in a little country church, was obliged to leave it all and flee for safety because he received a letter from the missionaries informing him that a committee was about to visit his village with a view to examining him for ordination.

The passport system, which is, perhaps, a necessity in such a country, is sometimes enforced with unnecessary

rigour, and the time men can be kept in prison without trial is a thing which calls loudly for reform. Before their condemnation no arrangement is made for feeding prisoners, whose rations have to be supplied by their friends, but after sentence has been passed a small daily allowance is made.

In a certain town which I visited an influential Koord was imprisoned. He had some time previously killed the father of an Armenian who acted as servant to one of the missionaries. Instead, however, of showing resentment for this act, the Armenian in a truly Christian spirit returned good for evil by taking food to the Koord. One would have thought that this man, however hardened, would have shown at least some gratitude for this, but he seemed to regard it merely as something he had the right to expect from a Christian, and told the man that if he were out of prison he would serve him as he had served his father.

It is so easy to imprison a Christian. "An Armenian youth connected with a certain mission wrote to a little girl about the points of some pens, meaning their nibs, and the Turkish spies twisted the letter into sedition and flung him into prison for many months.

The wife of the manager of a branch orphanage, formerly one of the American Mission pupils, was flung into prison on a charge of sedition because her name was the same as that of a noted revolutionist. She knew nothing about it, for he belonged to quite a different part of the country, and the only evidence against her was that in her school, brought by one of her pupils, was found an old piece of newspaper printed before she was born, which the Turks considered seditious; yet the central court forced the local court to convict her, and condemn her to five years' imprisonment, which she is not likely to live to see completed.

Some young Armenians, escorting a bride from their

village, were attacked by Koords, who attempted to carry off the girl. The men resisted, and for this ten men were imprisoned for ten years; of these, two died before the period was ended.

If a man incurs the suspicion of the police—and this is very easy to do, since certain well-known Christian hymns and texts of Scripture are regarded by the Turk as seditious—he is shadowed by a spy, or favoured with a domiciliary visit, all his papers are taken and read, and their meaning, if possible, twisted into some evidence against him. Nor is this all; his friends may be seized too, and flung into prison, and tortured in mind and body till they sign some paper incriminating him.

If a man fails to pay his taxes, he legally forfeits property and life. In practice what happens is this, he is imprisoned, and after long delay tried and condemned. Sometimes, however, he dies of starvation before the trial comes on.

Imprisonment is very commonly accompanied by torture, and the Turkish mind seems to possess a perfectly fiendish ingenuity for inventing new kinds.

Heavy and unjust taxation, oppressive espionage, insecurity of life, cruel beatings and imprisonment, plundering of property, and the liability to lose life or limb at any time, are however but mild sufferings compared to the unutterable wrongs which the Christian women have to suffer.

Whether in the field, in the street, or in the sanctity of their own homes they are never safe. It is inexpressibly sad. Nay, it is terrible, too terrible for words, and sometimes under the burden of it all I felt utterly cast down. I seemed like one in some horrible and gruesome nightmare from which there was no escape, whilst ever from the background of the sea of suffering which surged around, dark figures seemed to point reproachfully at me saying, "Your nation is to blame for

this." I prayed, I looked around for some loophole of escape from this hideous charge, but all in vain. I wanted to defend my nation, but how could I do so? Could I say that Britain did not know when she had Consuls in nearly all the towns. Yet it was true that many in England did not know, and ignorance was the only excuse that had any heart in it at all. There was no other explanation to give which did not condemn my own country, so I could only resolve to sit down and bear the brunt of it, seeking by God's help to comfort and sympathise with the people in the burdens they were bearing.

I wondered at first why it was that some of the young boys in the villages looked so much like girls, and discovered later that, in order to save them from Moslem passion, the villagers sometimes dress their daughters in boy's clothes.

"We would be happier if we had no girls," I have heard Armenians say. Should a girl be beautiful she seeks to hide her good looks by keeping her face dirty, or smearing it with mud, whilst at the same time she wears the oldest possible clothes and goes about with her hair dishevelled.

Little regard is paid by Moslems to the honour of Armenian girls, who are sometimes stolen and at other times hunted like gazelles by their fiendish adversaries.

It not infrequently happens, after a Christian girl becomes engaged, that she is compelled to bid farewell to her mother, and sobbing bitterly, is carried off to the village of the Koordish chief of the district, and compelled to live with him for a time ere she is allowed to marry. For this revolting and abominable custom the oft-repeated excuse that such things happen in all semi-civilised countries can surely hardly hold good.

Much more might be said on this subject, but over many things it is best to draw a veil. It is difficult to

record suffering, impossible to do so in such a manner that the reader can experience what it means. In recording instances one is only touching the surface, it is the unseen pain of the broken heart that bites most sharply. Suffice it to say, and I make this statement on good authority, that in many Armenian villages scarcely a woman can be found who has not at some time or other been the forced victim of Koordish or Turkish lust.

There are things which happen to the women of which one cannot write, but ordinary brutality may be recorded.

"Please come and see my mother," pleaded a little child who came to see me one day in a certain village, "the soldiers have broken her head and her sides," but knowing that if I went near such a case the woman would probably be put to far greater tortures afterwards for having complained, I did not accede to the request of the little one.

It is so easy to read of these things, easier still to cast aspersions on their veracity. They need to be felt to be understood, you must live with these people and suffer with them if you wish to fully comprehend their condition.

Diplomacy may say that these things are not so or make the cold excuse that they exist in any semi-civilised community. Perhaps they do, but you cannot compare the Armenian nation—with a history reaching back beyond that of England or America, with a Church to which almost every member of the nation belongs—to a semi-civilised community. Armenians have latent in them characteristics and powers which Europeans have to develop if they would obtain. When their environment is considered their civilisation is one of their most remarkable features.

It may be contended by those who make this excuse that it is the Turks and Koords who are the semi-civilised ones. Even so, I reply this is no excuse for

what goes on. There is no semi-civilised community on the face of the earth which has European powers pledged to protect it and which is allowed to suffer the inhuman barbarities so often meted out to the Armenians in Turkey.

"The very wrongs that made the French peasantry rise and in one deluge of blood sweep a corrupt aristocracy from their land are being enacted with ten-fold horrors in Turkey to-day," only in this case it is no "grand seigneur," but "rural police" or robber chiefs, who levy blackmail on every maid that marries.

It is useless for enemies to defame these women and accuse them of lack of moral tone; the very rocks of Zeitoun and the waters of the Zab and the Euphrates could bear witness against such a charge, since hundreds met their death there rather than submit to dishonour. And for the men to interfere means death, and not success. Recent records show they would not mind the death were it not that they also fail to protect."*

A scene comes to my mind as I write, one which I can never forget. In a tiny little church in one of the villages I stayed behind, after the close of the service, to speak to one or two Armenians.

It was a very plain building with straw mats spread on the earthen floor that the people might sit upon it, some parts however being devoid of even this protection. A low wooden rail ran across the church from side to side. This is used to separate the women from the men, the latter sitting in front and the former behind. Dark shadows filled the corners of the building and a dim light flickered near its centre. As I stood behind the rail of separation, chatting on various subjects, the door of the church opened, a woman peered in, and finding that there was no zabtieh present, she slowly approached. Though simply and poorly clad she looked very beautiful as in

* Turkish Rule in time of Peace, by E. Cantlow.

the twilight she knelt down at the rail, and leaning her arms upon it, asked if she might speak to me.

Then she sobbed out her piteous story—how because she had not been able to satisfy all their demands for food, the soldiers had broken her arm—finishing by turning her wistful face towards me and asking in mournful simplicity the old, old question, which seemed burnt in letters of fire upon my soul, and each repetition of which seemed more maddening and heartrending: “Why does England leave us in this condition?”

What could I say? I sadly tried to explain that Christianity was on a different footing in England from what it was with them, that, although nominally a Christian country, everyone there was not a Church member, that the Government was a conglomerate one made up of men of various religious convictions.

She could not understand this. England was a Christian country, she had wealth and power, she had undertaken to see that the Armenians were protected, surely she could help them. Why did she not do so?

As I looked at her I longed to have power to tell my fellow-countrymen of the condition of these people, for I felt that if they knew the nakedness of their distress, that if they could see the blood trickling from these broken hearts, they would do something. Surely their seeming apathy was caused by lack of knowledge, by want of thought rather than want of heart. So I told her that England did not know. It was a poor weak excuse, and I must confess to a feeling of shame as I made it, and then watched the woman slowly rise from her knees and sadly depart to her little village home.

If it is true that England does not know she ought to know, seeing that she avowedly took the Island of Cyprus in order to ensure the protection of the Armenians.

What would you have replied to this woman's pleading? I wished that I could have placed before her one or two

of England's leading politicians and left them to answer her.

What would you have said? Would you have shocked her simple faith by quoting to her Lord Salisbury's words to Sir Clare Ford in 1892, on his assumption of the duties of Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Sultan: "Her Majesty's Government have of late years desisted from urging upon the Porte the introduction of general reforms, in fulfilment of its obligations under Article 61 of the Treaty," &c.

Her Majesty's Government would wish your Excellency to continue to act on these lines.*

If you had not felt able to say this, would you have told her that the one who was at that time leader of the British Parliament had declared, amidst loud ministerial cheers, that the Government were not going to "add to the nation's responsibilities by an insane policy of philanthropic adventure" for the protection of the Christian races of Turkey; to which he added: "The particular ground and policy on which we base our action . . . cannot be shaken by any mere detailed accounts of the harrowing horrors which undoubtedly take place in . . . Armenia"?†

Even if such a policy were necessary, the cheers, considering the obligations we are under on behalf of the Armenians might well have been dispensed with, or replaced by expressions of regret.

What would you have said?

*Blue Book No. 3 (1896), p. 8.

† Parliamentary Debates, vol. cxli, p. 1395.

CHAPTER XIII

THINGS THAT ARE ALWAYS GOING ON

THE heavy wooden gates of the mission premises stood wide open ! The little wicket, through which access was sometimes gained to the enclosure, would have been totally inadequate to admit the stream of people who were flocking into the compound on this particular day. As they came up the hill towards the entrance, some struggling with large bundles of bedding, others carrying tiny mites of children in their arms, there was no need to ask their errand, and the sympathetic gatekeeper, when they reached the entrance, let them through without word or question.

From the large parcels of food which some brought with them, one might have imagined that the missionaries had arranged a gigantic picnic for the hundreds who were over-running their premises, yet such a thought would have been belied by the troubled looks exhibited in the faces of many, who, as they gathered in little knots, were anxiously engaged in the discussion of some news which seemed to give them great uneasiness.

What has happened to cause these Armenians to leave their homes unprotected and fly for refuge to the American mission station, many breathing a sigh of relief as they arrive exhausted within the shelter of its hospitable walls ? If we mix with the multitude within the enclosure we hear continually the word "tebk," and this explains everything. It is the Armenian word for

"massacre," and soon all know the story of the events which have led to this stampede of terror.

The body of a Turkish soldier, pierced through by a bullet, has been found outside an Armenian's house. The consensus of opinion amongst the refugees is, that it has been placed there purposely; there being other evidence that the Turks are seeking an excuse for a massacre. Several Armenians have been shot down in the streets, and—by the order of the authorities—the house, outside of which the body was found, has been burnt.

The memory of previous massacres is still fresh in the minds of many, and the awful dread of having their loved ones torn from them to be hacked to pieces by the swords of the Turks, or to become the forced victims of Moslem passion, keeps these thousands of refugees from returning to their homes for a couple of days. Several hundreds are accommodated in the boys' schoolroom, but the majority are obliged to sleep out in the open.

The Vali of the town seeks to do the right thing and prevent a massacre, but apparently has very little power to carry out his own wishes. Finally, owing largely to pressure brought to bear on the authorities by Consuls and other foreigners, the impending carnage is averted and the terrified people return to their homes.

In Britain the question is often asked: "Have the massacres ceased?" This interrogation is somewhat difficult to answer unless the term "massacre" be defined. If by it is meant the sudden putting to death of multitudes by sword and bullet, then they have only happened occasionally since the great carnage of ten years ago, but if other, and more slow and painful, though less apparent means of causing the deaths of Christians may be employed, or if the oft-repeated slaughter of individuals without cause and without subsequent enquiry, falls, as I think it does, under the term "massacre," then it is true

that they still continue ; whilst a recent example of the danger and dread of more wholesale slaughter is afforded by the incident with which this chapter opens, and which happened only last year, also by the actual massacre of thousands, at Sassoun, two years ago.

After the great carnage of the years 1894-1896, the tide of assassination naturally receded, owing partly to the scarcity of available victims ; so that, instead of hundreds being despatched *en masse*, it came to be only the ones or twos who suffered death at the will of their over-lords, sometimes because of slight offences, such as an inability to pay taxes, but often without any provocation at all. The great sea of Moslem antipathy and prejudice still existed, however, and as soon as the Christian population showed some few signs of recovery from the terrible blows received, its tide again began to rise. More than once during the past year or two it has threatened to engulf the remainder of the Armenian nation, many of whom are the children of those who met their death in the great massacres of ten years ago, and not a few of whom, ere taking up the sterner duties of life, received an education and equipment for business, in orphanages under the care of American missionaries.

The extermination of the Armenians, on the accomplishment of which it would seem as though the Sultan had set his mind, is at the present time going on apace, but usually by a new method, which, whilst silent in its working, and carried out in such a way as to attract little or no attention from the Powers, is, in comparison with the system previously adopted, even more painful and heartrending, and more fatal in its results. The aim is, apparently, to so reduce them as to make life an absolute impossibility. Thus grinding oppression has become more common than wholesale massacre, and the Armenians die more frequently from terror, imprisonment, or starvation than from the sword, but they are just as

surely being wiped from the face of the earth as if they were openly butchered. In proof of this I give the following estimate, carefully compiled during the present year, by one who has resided for over twenty years in the district to which it refers, and whose testimony may be regarded as thoroughly reliable.

"In this vilayet the Armenians are incomparably poorer than they were ten years ago, and possess barely one-tenth of the property that they then had. The Christian population has during this period decreased by at least one-half, the cause of this being the deaths during the time of the massacre, the greater number who died from disease during the three months immediately following that event, and the large exodus which took place during those months, together with the persecution, famine, and violence which have been going on ever since."

A massacre is, after all, soon over, and in comparison to the perpetual suffering now endured, would, I am sure, be preferred by many. The things which are always going on are harder than death; and a common saying when an Armenian dies young is, "He was righteous, and therefore has been allowed to die soon."

I propose now to give an account of some of the wrongs which are responsible for the horrible sufferings of the Armenians, and will illustrate the various points from personal experience, or incidents given on reliable testimony. I am of course unable to mention the names of the towns or villages lest it should cause annoyance from the Turkish Government to people living in them. It must also be borne in mind that many things which ordinarily occur were probably hidden from my observation because of the fear that, being a British subject, I might report them.

The things which call most loudly for reform may be roughly classified under four headings, firstly, taxation, which, in addition to being unjust, is enforced in an

irregular, cruel, and merciless manner. Secondly, exclusion from equal rights with Moslems at law, and the lack of power to secure redress of grievances. Thirdly, the prohibition of arms to Christians, and fourthly, the unchecked rapacity of the Koords.

Provided the equivalent of the taxes were granted, and only the proper amount charged, it would perhaps be hardly right to call them unjust or excessive, but they are rendered so by the fact that the equivalent is entirely withheld. In addition to this, the rate of taxation has during the past few years been greatly increased, *e.g.*, the tax on wheat used to be one-tenth of its value, but now one-eighth is taken, the excuse for the additional charge being that it is for road-making, education, and fortifications.

The tax on sheep has practically doubled within recent years, also the tax on hay, the latter due to the fact that the tax is now charged on the autumn as well as on the spring crop. This, very naturally, cuts the heart out of the livelihood of the poor villagers, who, against great odds, are struggling to make both ends meet. A poll tax, commencing from birth, is levied on all the male Christian population as an exemption from military duty. In spite of the fact that the roads are execrable, every man has also to pay a road tax of about two shillings and sixpence. A destitute man, whose family were hungry, living in a street through which a cart cannot pass, has recently been imprisoned for three days on account of his inability to pay this tax.

The principal other things taxed are houses, free estates, land, even if barren, crops, garden produce and wine, to which have been added in recent years horses, cows, and oxen. It is difficult, perhaps, for us to realise what this means to the poor villager, who has only one ox left in the stable, upon which he is dependent for the plowing of his field and the planting and reaping of corn to sustain his family. Finding a tax



ONE OF THE VICTIMS.

Poor village woman, ill and destitute, her only clothing a covering of rags hardly three feet square, her pillow an earthenware vessel. The snow was still on the ground when this picture was taken.

suddenly put on his ox, and being unable to pay it, he is obliged to sell the animal, and with it goes the last hope of livelihood. Employment is almost unobtainable, he watches his family starve, and at last, in desperation, goes and fetches the refuse of the vintage—the seeds, skins, and stalks of grapes—or failing this, gets some ground straw, dried weed-stalks and roots, from which he attempts to make bread. I know of one village in which, at the present time, thirty families are trying to subsist in this way. The result of such diet is gastritis and dropsy, which is largely fatal, whilst a very virulent form of typhus has been induced by famine conditions.

It will be noticed that the taxes rest very largely upon things which are the essentials of life, therefore when they are unjustly increased the existence of the Christians is dangerously jeopardised: they really fall heaviest on the villagers.

The taxes due from a village are sold by auction at harvest time, and the purchasers can take zabtiehs to enforce the collection.

It occasionally happens that a village is able to buy up its own taxes, and in a few sections, such as the Talori district of Sassoun, no taxes are paid to the Turkish Government, the Koords maintaining a feudal relation to the Christians, and forbidding their paying to the Government, whilst demanding much themselves.

Added to the horrors of over-taxation, demands are often made for money in what is a purely criminal manner, inasmuch as there is not the slightest occasion for the exaction.

A very good reply to one of these wrongful impositions was given by an Armenian who, during my stay in a certain town, had an imaginary tax charged against him. His father, as everyone well knew, had died six years previously; but he was informed by the authorities that they had discovered his father had only been dead for

two years. As the father's taxes had been unpaid for six years, they requested the son to pay for the other four. His reply, made in court, and characterised by a good deal of cleverness was, "My father has been dead for six years, not two, but if you will give him back to me now, alive and well, I will pay for the six years since his death."

One might give many instances of this sort of injustice, I give one more only, an incident which happened during the month of May of the present year.

A poor man, in a small, barely-furnished home, was struggling to support his family by conducting a cheap kindergarten school. In this way he was barely able to make a living, and in order to lighten this burden, as well as to improve his own condition, his son, two years ago, escaped from the country and is now in Russia or America. The police tried to compel the father to pay the son's taxes, and being unable to do this, he was taken from his work to the Government building, where a police captain pounded him, injuring him severely, and breaking and dislocating the third and fourth ribs on the left side. There have been many similar cases, and some are reported to have died as a result of such treatment.

Another favourite way of raising money wrongfully is to charge a man over again with taxes long since paid, but of which he has lost the receipt.

The burden of taxation is terribly intensified by the irregular method in which the charges are collected, and which puts all the taxes of the absolutely destitute on their neighbours and relatives, thus tripling and quadrupling them. It is true that there are certain laws governing the collection of taxes, but those who have the temerity to demand the benefit of these, are arbitrarily beaten and imprisoned, by those who should protect them. According to law taxes should be collected three times a year by two zabtiehs only, but from four to ten of these officials arrive in a village almost every week throughout

the year, presumably for this purpose. They usually have their horses with them, and both men and animals have to be fed and housed free of charge until their departure, which will only take place after the amount demanded has been paid.

When zabtiehs "sit down" on a village they do not eat the ordinary food of its inhabitants, many of whom, on account of their poverty, hardly ever taste meat. Eggs and the best butter, milk and cheese must be supplied, chickens are killed indiscriminately, whilst the villagers can scarcely afford bread for themselves.

In vain does the head-man come and show to the zabtiehs the receipts for the taxes of the village, or tell them that since they got these receipts payment has again been made to others, who have refused to give one. The amount has to be paid, and the longer the poor down-trodden Christians delay, the greater is the expense for the housing of the tax-gatherers and their horses. Meanwhile the zabtiehs, during their stay, beat and abuse the people.

Knowing that the devout villagers attend church daily, and having nothing much to do, one of their favourite employments is to lounge about in the vicinity of that building in order to watch the women going to church, and when they see one who strikes their fancy, they try and arrange to claim her as wife or "slave." If other methods fail this can sometimes be managed by so over-taxing her father beyond all reasonable limits that at last, in order to save the rest of the family, he is obliged to sacrifice his daughter. Should the woman be married it is not very difficult to arrange for her husband to be imprisoned. With such men idling about in their village, eating the best of food, annoying and beating the people, and endangering the women, it is no matter for surprise that the poor villagers endeavour to pay the amount demanded. Having no money themselves, they are

obliged to borrow from some rich Turk or Koord at a high rate of interest.

Since the time of the massacres much of the money so obtained has had to be borrowed under conditions which entailed the return of double, or more than double its value, within a fixed period. This transaction is spoken of by the Koordish word "salaf," a term which was practically unknown to Armenians before the time of the great massacres, but which, on account of the number who have had to borrow under these conditions, has since come into use.

In addition to this irregular method of gathering the money, the taxes are enforced in a cruel and merciless manner. I have referred to a man having his last ox taken, of which there have been many instances recently, but even more outrageous is the heartless way in which the last cow or sheep of a poor widow is seized, or her last bit of bedding ruthlessly sold. Provided a poor person is not even possessed of bedding, the timbers and rafters which support the roof of the little mud or stone house are fixed upon as being the only articles of value left. To obtain these the house must be destroyed, and as the law of Turkey says that they are not to be taken for taxes, the officials get round this by compelling the people to sell, thus they are left homeless.

The tax collectors in making their rounds usually take with them a Koord or Turk, also a man who can transfer titles, and when anyone is unable to pay he is obliged to sell something, such as a field, at about one-tenth of its value, to one of these Moslems. This unreasonable and unjust taxation has been gradually increasing in severity during the past few years until now it seems as though the people had reached the deepest depths of abject poverty and misery to which it is possible for human beings to sink.

"During the present year the Armenians in a certain

little mountain village, almost beggars and without sufficient dry bread to satisfy their hunger, crouched in terror as they heard that the tax-gatherers were coming. The men looked with wild haggard eyes at their wives and daughters thinking of what might happen to them when the taxes were not forthcoming, and the women moved about with white, scared faces. Well might these peasants fear the approach of the officials, for in the villages below they had just tortured the people with fiendish barbarity. They had beaten the women and hung some of them up by the hair in order to beat them, then forced them to open their mouths to be spat into, and subjected them to unheard of indignities.

One zabtieh, less cruel than the rest, cut down a man who had been hung up till the blood poured from his nostrils; but for his humanity the wretched victim must have died. This particular official was brave enough to do more. He made his way to the neighbouring city and dared to ask the Governor the straight question, 'Did you send us to collect taxes or to hang people?'

I have already mentioned the way in which the villagers are obliged to give free board and lodging to zabtiehs. This is on account of what is called the hospitality tax, by which all Christian villagers are obliged to feed and house, free of charge, all soldiers and zabtiehs who come to their village. I believe that the law on this point is that soldiers must be given free hospitality for three days, but, as a matter of fact, it is demanded by all Government officials who are travelling, and very often for more than three days. In general nothing is paid by other Moslems when staying in an Armenian village, but occasionally some of these may give a little.

Quite apart from free board and lodging, I have always found that Moslems prefer staying in the Christian villages because of their greater cleanliness. It can be imagined, therefore, what a burden is put on a village when a party

of twenty soldiers with several other travellers suddenly arrive and have to be fed for three days. The zabtiehs, in the execution of their duty, practically live on the villages, passing from one to another and demanding free entertainment during their stay in each.

The demands for hospitality are often most brutally enforced. I know of one case in which an Armenian of high character kept in his little house a few hens and chickens. A party of soldiers who were in the village came to him and demanded these. He gave them some, but they soon returned and asked for more. Upon his demurring to this request, they attempted to obtain them by force. "You have no right to take any more," he said, whereupon he was struck a heavy blow on the head which rendered him unconscious. As a result of this, although he lived for some years, his mind was unhinged, and his wife died from a broken heart.

After a party of soldiers has visited a village, there is often very little food left at all, and a common saying is: "If you have an egg, don't use it, keep it, also bread, remain hungry, for some Turks may come in the night, and if you cannot give, you will be killed."

In illustration of the manner in which Christians suffer by the exclusion from equal rights with Moslems at law, their powerlessness to obtain redress of grievances, and the prohibition of arms, I give the following incidents.

Last year, in a certain village, which shall be nameless, the tax-gatherer demanded from a man a sum of money which he was unable to pay, and on his refusing the request, struck him in the eyes with a stick, rendering him totally blind. In this instance the man complained to the Government, but his case received no consideration whatever.

Some months ago, the cruelty of the zabtiehs was so great in another village that its inhabitants decided to write a letter of protest to the Government. The only

outcome was that on their next visit the tax-gatherers acted with increased rigour and brutality. As the testimony of a Christian against a Moslem is of no value, protest is always a danger.

Turkish officials assume to themselves a great deal of arbitrary power, and though in some districts it is not as great as it was fifty years ago when they were almost absolute autocrats, it is sufficient to enable them to sentence people to punishment without any real trial.

In one village which I visited there lived a man who, six years previously, had, by the order of an official, received one thousand strokes. How far he deserved this extreme severity, from the effects of which he was still suffering at the time of my visit, I cannot authoritatively state, but I was told that it was inflicted because he was suspected of having revolutionary tendencies.

Who is there, when Moslems have wronged Christians, to bring them to justice ?

Who is there to ensure that the Armenians have that protection which they ought to have ?

The answer is—Nobody. The Moslems may treat the Christians almost as they please, and there is nobody to obtain either redress or justice.

Well might one ask : “ Who cares ? ”

The prohibition of arms to Christians leaves them entirely at the mercy of the Koords and Turks, and prevents any adequate defence of their property from indiscriminate marauders. With the solitary exception of the dragoman of a British Consulate, I have never seen an Armenian carrying either a dagger, pistol or gun.

I might record many stories of defenceless Armenians struck down without cause, but the following, told me by several Armenians, on whose word I could rely, and which happened subsequent to the introduction of the so-called reforms, serves to illustrate both the danger in

being unarmed, and the disadvantage an Armenian is under in a law court.

A Koord, becoming angry with an Armenian peasant, lifted his sword to kill him. The man who was attacked happened to have in his hand a stout stick, which he raised in order to ward off the blow about to descend on his head.

Fortunately for the Armenian the sword broke on the stick, whereupon the Koord pulled him up in court, to recover damages for the loss of his sword.

"Why did you break this man's sword?" asked the judge.

"In order to save myself from being killed," was the reply.

"*Sen bilmezsen Koord der vourar, nichoon odooni carshousena tootden?*" ("Don't you know that he is a Koord and strikes, why did you put your stick against his sword?"), said the judge, and the case was given against the peasant, who had to pay not only for the value of the sword, but also the cost of the action.

In one Armenian village, through which I passed, the inhabitants were prohibited by the Koords from keeping dogs, animals almost necessary for their safety.

Added to the sufferings already mentioned is the unchecked rapacity of the Koords. It would undoubtedly be to the advantage of the Turkish Government to place some restraint upon the liberty of these tribes to rob and plunder the Christians, for they are helping to "kill the goose" that has so long laid the golden eggs for the Turkish revenues, but apparently it is the will of the Sultan, who probably receives bribes from many of the Koordish chiefs, in order that they may be allowed to continue their depredations unhindered.

Not only does this tend to stagnate trade by rendering travel and transport unsafe, but it kills the spirit of industry in the villagers, who have so often had all the

fruits of their toil robbed from them, that they have at last given up in hopeless despair.

"What is the use of planting my field?" says the peasant. "The Koords will not even allow the grain to ripen, ere they come and carry it away."

I sat one day behind the counter of a little general store, kept by an Armenian. He did all the work, but to save his stock from the rapacity and plunder of Koords was obliged to have a Koord as partner in the business, who, whilst himself doing nothing beyond furnishing capital, took a large share of the profits.

I had not been there long before a Koord entered carrying a bundle of fox skins. Throwing them on the counter he asked the Armenian to purchase them. The shop-keeper explained that he had sufficient, and was therefore unable to do so, whereupon the Koord grew angry, and assuming a threatening attitude said, "You must buy them and pay for them what I ask."

Fearing that the man would attempt to use force, the Armenian informed him that he had a Koord as a partner, on hearing which the vendor of the fox skins picked them up from the counter, and sulkily left the shop, doubtless to go off in search of some other Christian on whom he could bring forcible pressure to bear if necessary.

This is only one instance of many showing how trade is hindered, and to what a great extent the Moslems live upon the thrift of the Christians, who, in order to secure their property from plunder, are obliged to toady to, or take into partnership, men who sometimes prove themselves to be most treacherous in their dealings.

During last February two Armenian men and one woman went from a certain village to a neighbouring town to transact some business and buy a number of things. On the way home they were seized by Koords, the woman outraged, all three killed, and their donkey with its load of wheat and other purchases stolen. The

murderer and thief is well known in the district, but the Government has done nothing, and left the bodies of the murdered people to lie on the roadside for days. Why is complaint not made? Why, indeed? For the best of reasons. Eight months previously two young men, aged twenty-two, and an old man of seventy were murdered on the same spot, and the Armenians who made complaint to the Government were cast into prison, where they still languish, without a trial.

Thus, ground between the upper and nether millstones of Turkish taxation and repression of justice on the one hand and Koordish robbery and rapacity on the other, it is small wonder that these people should have a habit of saying, when any of their number dies before reaching manhood, "Happy is he!"

CHAPTER XIV

SOJOURNS AMONGST SYRIANS

THE sun was streaming down with relentless heat into the courtyard outside the little church at Sert. It was Sunday, and the deacons of the church, who had arranged for me to take one service that day, had gradually increased the number to five. The early morning service had been so well attended that it was thought the only way to accommodate the worshippers at the others was by getting them to sit on the floor, as in this way they could be packed closer. Some of the Syrians were therefore busily engaged in carrying the seats out of the building.

The living room assigned to me was on the other side of the courtyard, a strange dome-roofed apartment built of stone, and as I sat on a quilt which had been placed on the ground outside its door and watched their eager preparations, I could not help remarking the great appreciation shown by the Christian races of Turkey for spiritual things. There is no need in this country to ask people to come to a service; anyone who goes to minister to them has difficulty in escaping their importunities to preach. Later that day the church was not only packed, but crowds were listening outside, the window having been removed that they might hear the better. During the five days spent here I had fourteen services, and ere I left, some young men called to say that these had been the means of leading them to give their lives to the service of Christ.

One wonders why the originators of the town of Sert selected such a site on which to build. It stands in a very exposed position, and is I think very unlikely—as some have asserted—to be identical with the old city of Tigranocerta. The part of the town where the Moslems live is situated on a hill and the sewerage from this locality is washed down to the Christian quarter.

There is often a scarcity of water, and I believe the Christians are even prohibited from carrying away this sewerage, which, after being washed into their streets, is left there, with the hot sun on it, causing a noxious miasma which is most objectionable, and which often made me prefer remaining in my room with the door shut, to sitting in the open air of the courtyard. Numbers of Christians must be carried off yearly by the diseases which such a condition of things engenders. One of the industries of the town is the manufacture of handsome ebony walking-sticks inlaid with brass.

On leaving Sert, some Syrians escorted me for the first few hours, and we followed the course of a river, through the deep gorge which it had cut for itself on its way to join the waters of the Tigris. I was surprised at the greater liberty these men had : some of them were armed, and to my surprise they broke out into song at the roadside, singing a familiar hymn. It was the first spontaneous song I had heard in Turkey—the Armenians are too crushed down to sing, except it be in a service, and then like most oppressed nations, it is usually in a plaintive minor key.

After a few hours we reached some sulphur springs, where the Syrians bathed, and at which, after a short rest, I parted from them with the exception of two, who, like myself, were travelling to Midyat—three days distant. Fortunately a large party of soldiers were travelling the same road and I kept close to them, which may perhaps partly account for the fact that a party of brigands,



SYRIAN WOMEN WASHING CLOTHES.

waiting at a bridge which it was necessary to cross, allowed me to pass unmolested. The caravan which followed me fell into their hands. The robbers took their booty and the horses to their village, which was ruled over by a Koordish woman, but afterwards allowed those whom they had plundered to buy back the animals.

Almost on the same day on which I had this escape, a missionary friend, who was a few days' journey distant, in the Jezireh district, had a terrible experience amongst brigands, which nearly cost him his life.

He was staying in one of the mountain villages, and in company with a native pastor started out one afternoon to visit a neighbouring hamlet.

Neither was armed; a pistol possessed by the missionary having been stolen from him some weeks previously by one of his visitors. Late in the afternoon, they set out for the return journey. Ere arriving at their destination it was necessary to pass through a valley, and as they entered it the shades of night were beginning to fall. Somewhat to their surprise they found themselves held up by two fierce and well-armed Koords. The missionary had, unfortunately, recently replenished his purse at a mission station, and having therefore rather a large sum of money on him, demurred considerably to handing his valuables over to the Koords, who meanwhile were joined by a third. Seeing, however, that resistance was useless, and that there was no way of escape, they gave up everything, and the robbers allowed them to proceed on their journey. They soon came after them again, and stopping them said: "We cannot let you go, because if we do you may tell the Government, and we will be punished. In order to prevent this we have decided to kill you."

In vain did the missionary and the native pastor argue and expostulate. The Koords, after conferring together as to how they could best dispose of the bodies of their

victims, came to the conclusion that it would be best, after having killed them, to throw them into the swift waters of the Tigris, which was some little distance away. Instead, therefore, of killing them on the spot, they marched them in the direction of the river intending to dispatch them when they reached its banks.

Slowly and sorrowfully, in the semi-darkness, this little procession wended its way through the rocky gorges of Koordistan, the stillness of the night seeming to mock the missionary and his native helper, as they longed that they might meet with other human beings ere they arrived at the place of execution. It seemed as though for each of them the last half hour of life had come, and they may well have wondered whether, after their bodies had been thrown into the Tigris, their friends and relatives would ever discover what had been their fate.

As they neared the river a happy thought occurred to the native pastor, who offered, if they would let the missionary go, to stand surety with his own life, that no information should be given to the authorities. The robbers discussed this proposition, and, knowing that at any time they could shoot the native pastor if the pledge were not kept, finally agreed, after both he and the missionary had given a solemn promise not to communicate with the Government, to spare their lives and release them.

The two who had so nearly met an untimely end were thereupon set at liberty, and they at once made their way back to the village, thanking God for their merciful deliverance, though unable to make any complaint of what had transpired.

But to return to my journey. On the second day we reached the Tigris, a muddy river flowing at amazing rate through a narrow gorge. The horses swam across, and we, with the baggage, crossed on a raft—a frail structure made by fastening together in a square formation thirty-

six inflated sheepskins and laying sticks over the top. In springtime, when the river is in flood, such rafts are very often made use of to travel down the river with the current, the journey from Diarbekir to Baghdad being performed in a comparatively short space of time. On arrival, the rafts are taken to pieces and sold.

The village which we stayed at that night was inhabited by both Armenians and Moslems. Beside it were the ruins of a Christian village and the remains of a church, whilst in the side of a precipice in the neighbourhood were caves, which had been at one time the residence of monks, and were said to contain inscriptions in Syriac executed by them on the walls of rock.

There are many villages in this district—I believe about two hundred in number—which, until three centuries ago, worshipped as Christians of the old Syrian Church, at which time, it is said, they voluntarily accepted Mohammedanism because their bishop refused to allow them to eat meat on fast days. I stayed for a few hours at one of these.

One passes on the roads some sad evidences of ruthless destruction, and of the persecution of Christians. Crumbling churches and ruined villages tend to sadden the outlook on what is otherwise beautiful scenery, and often at the roadsides one sees a pile of stones—a sign that on that spot some man has been killed. Every passer by is expected to add another stone to the heap and at the same time curse the murderer.

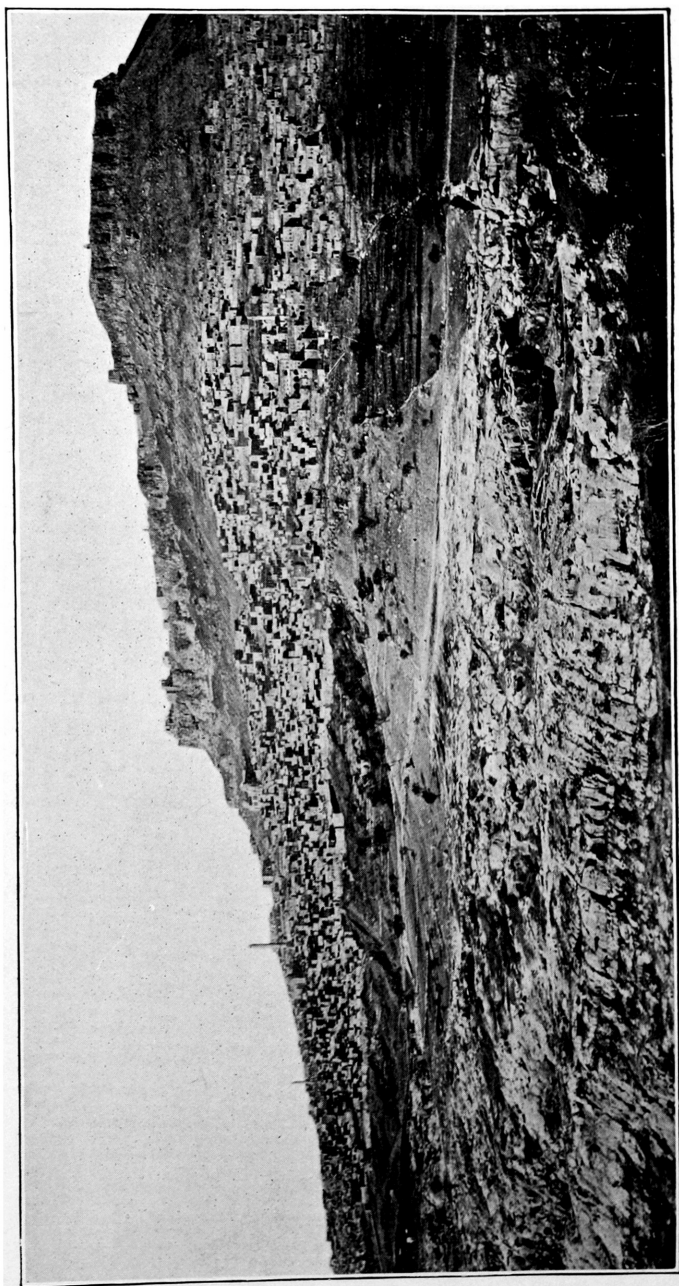
On arrival at Midyat, I was escorted to a large empty house outside the town, at which I expected to find Mr. Andrus, a missionary from Mardin. He, however, had not arrived, and next morning I was faced with the difficulty of procuring some food. Natives were afraid to bring it, for only a few weeks previously a missionary, passing through, had gone to the house of one of them for lunch, and the man who received him had for ten days

subsequently been annoyed by the Government for having shown friendliness to a foreigner. I sent several messages to the town, asking them to cook and send me something, but it was nearly mid-day before one man, bolder than the rest, brought some eatables, and after gently reproaching me for my impatience, left me to devour them in solitude.

Mr. Andrus, bringing supplies with him, arrived in the afternoon and remained with me during the five days which I spent in conducting services in the town.

The social condition of the Syrians in these districts is a great deal better than that of the Armenians in Van and Bitlis vilayets. When the fact is considered that the Syrians were not included in the stipulation of the Berlin Treaty, which ensured protection of the Armenians, one cannot help thinking that, but for this Treaty, the latter nation might have been equally prosperous. There is, of course, as has already been shown, a certain degree of suspicion attaching to the Syrians, but nothing like that under which the Armenians live. In going to visit one of the Christians in this town, I had to go along back lanes that the authorities might not know of the visit.

Whilst in Midyat, I preached, by invitation, in the old Syrian Church, known as the Jacobite, which has many adherents in these parts. The church was filled with people, the women being behind a boarded partition which was so high that, even when standing on the chancel steps, I was unable to see their faces. The building was not large enough to accommodate all, and right out into the roadway they stood and listened intently for a whole hour whilst I preached. The five priests were also present, and I felt grateful to them for the opportunity, so kindly given, of declaring God's way of salvation in their historic church. They showed me many old, well illustrated and very valuable manuscripts, for one of which a hundred pounds had been refused.



MARDIN.

Ere leaving this town, I was presented with a thank-offering by some members of the Protestant Church, a proof that although the Syrians differ greatly from the Armenians in character they do not come behind them in liberality.

Two days' riding over rough footpaths strewn with a rich profusion of wild flowers brought us to Mardin, a crescent-shaped city which embraces, a little way below its fortified summit, a very high hill overlooking the Mesopotamian plain. As in Sert and Midyat, the chief language spoken is Arabic. Riding along outside the wall of the town so as to avoid passing through the Moslem quarter, I did not escape the attentions of the Mohammedan children, who employed themselves by throwing clods and stones at me. It is quite a usual thing for stones to be thrown at the missionary ladies whilst walking in these streets, and several times, when out riding with them, the stones flew around us pretty thickly.

In addition to Mr. Andrus, who, with his wife, superintends the educational work, the mission at Mardin has on its staff Dr. and Mrs. Thom, three native Bible-women, and one colporteur. Dr. Thom is in charge of a hospital which is doing good work.

There are also two boarding schools on the premises, and the missionaries have charge of a number of elementary schools in the town. The number of orphans under their care has been diminishing, especially the girls. An epidemic of matrimony has been very prevalent amongst them this year, and such a thing is generally hailed with delight by the missionary ladies, who are always glad to see the girls settled in homes of their own, and who, in finding suitable partners for them, become quite proficient at match-making.

One great difficulty experienced is that of getting permission to put up suitable buildings for missionary work.

I found that the church was a dark, unsuitable place, probably a house, which had had the partition inside knocked down to render it suitable for services. The people had subscribed the money for a new building but could not put it up without a special firman which they were unable to obtain. This church, which was in charge of a native pastor, had a membership of about seventy-five.

I believe that a good number were helped by the services conducted there, as a letter received from one of the missionaries a few weeks after my departure speaks of over fifty having applied for admission to the church, about forty of whom were afterwards received. Many of the orphan and school girls accepted Christ as their Saviour, and several, by confessing to things that had been wrong in their lives, gave proof of the sincerity of their profession. The following extract from an American paper speaks of the work amongst them. "We found Mr. Campbell here when we came. He spent three weeks here and helped to bring many to a final decision. Our school was ready for a revival, and every one of the girls but one or two have declared themselves on the Lord's side, and some have applied for admission to the church."

In one of the meetings held in the church I told the story of the young man who acted as cook in Bitlis, and who had come twice to express the great joy he had received since accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as his Saviour. On the night before leaving Mardin a young man came to thank me because, as he expressed it, he had received greater joy than the one in Bitlis. Thus, amidst their trials, these people are able to find comfort and happiness in the Gospel.

An American lady, who was visiting the town, attended some of the services in the church and was brought under conviction. Whilst out riding one morning she yielded her life fully to Christ, received assurance of salvation, and, that same evening, called together some of the mis-

sionaries for a praise meeting in the drawing-room, at which she gave her first testimony.

It was subsequently given at an afternoon meeting for young women, at which several of those present told of having been brought to decision for Christ as the result of Mr. Millard's visit.

It was a great joy to see, "after many days," the fruit of Mr. Millard's labours, and as I think of the good he did during the months spent in Armenia and then look at the great and appalling need for gathering in the harvest which God is giving in the foreign mission field, I cannot help wishing that God might touch the hearts of some young men, especially those with gifts and attainments for such work, and send them forth as evangelists to the mission stations of the world, to cheer the missionaries by their presence and prayers, to lead souls to the Saviour, as well as to give definite teaching on the cleansing and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. I earnestly desire to see an organisation started for carrying on such work.

Missionaries are short-handed, and they need such help, for if evangelists are required at home they are needed a thousand-fold more abroad. But where are the men? One sees Christian men going in for business, entering professions, and making provision for their own comfort, but how few there are who choose a life of hardship and self-denial, for the sake of the Master and the salvation of souls.

The fields are white unto harvest, but who will go and whom shall we send?

There are souls sitting in darkness to-day without the light of the Gospel whom it lies within our power to save by giving them that light. Will you, my reader, if you are a follower of Christ, ask yourself, as in His presence, whether you are doing your share towards the salvation of those who have never heard? I do not mean are you

giving some of your superfluous cash to missionary work, there is no sacrifice in that, but are you giving that which it costs something to give, and the giving of which entails real self-denial? Have you ever gone without anything in order that the Gospel, which has brought so much blessing into your life, might be given to those sitting in darkness who are redeemed but do not know it?

What does it cost to save a soul? The work of Christ, plus what we give to make known that work. And is it not a solemn thought that if our gift be withheld the death of Christ may become of none effect to those to whom we might have sent the knowledge of the truth. Are we by our indifference or indulgence making His work of none effect?

Mohammedanism cannot regenerate. It is a philosophy without a Saviour. To the casual observer it often appears to have good points, but it does not satisfy the needs of the human soul. The worship usually consists of the repetition of set prayers in Arabic, and "includes neither preaching, reading from the Koran, nor singing. Occasional sermons are, however, delivered, sometimes by a teacher who is known as a *hoja*, sometimes by a *mullah*, or by a civic judge, for, in the Moslem system, church and state are one. In the sacred month of Ramazan preaching frequently takes place," and a missionary who was present at one of these services, thus describes it:—

"The great mosque was packed with a throng of men, each in a kneeling posture convenient for genuflections and prostrations, which, singly or in unison with others, he frequently performed. The venerable *hoja* began by reading from the Koran in Arabic, the religious language of Mohammedanism. But presently he drifted into explanations in Turkish, the language of his audience.

The preacher related several anecdotes from the Old Testament in a peculiar, garbled form that largely stripped them of moral power. Then he said:—

‘Men sin because they forget God, and they forget God because they love the world too much. Human life is illustrated by this incident : A man walking over a moor finds himself pursued by a lion. Casting about for some way of escape, he lights upon a well, down which he throws himself, and finding, by some chance, a platform half-way down, he takes refuge upon it. The lion comes roaring to the mouth of the well above. Happening to look down, the man also sees a fearful dragon at the bottom of the well, with mouth distended to catch him if he should fall. Furthermore, a black mouse and a white mouse come out from the sides of the well and begin to gnaw away the support of the little platform on which he stands. But the man, by chance having food and drink with him, instead of devoting his attention to the horrors of his situation, begins to eat and drink and carouse.

‘The man,’ explained the preacher, ‘represents humanity; the moor, this world through which we pass; the lion stands for the temptations which pursue man with such fierceness; the dragon is eternity, yawning beneath our feet; the black mouse and the white are day and night, or the flight of time, which is gnawing away the day of grace we now enjoy. Yet men live in forgetfulness of God, making merry with the vain delights of this life.’ And then he added, in effect: ‘May God Almighty have mercy on us and deliver us from the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil.’ And the great mosque rang with the cry, ‘Amin, Amin,’ from hundreds of stalwart men.”

That is Mohammedanism. It can discourse ably at times on the lost and perilous condition of mankind, but has no way of escape to shew. And this is the faith of two hundred millions of our fellow men, who are going into eternity without a Saviour.

Whilst in Mardin I had a wonderful token of the way

in which God provides for our needs even before we ourselves are aware of them. I received so many gifts of money, that, not knowing I was about to have a long and trying illness, and fearing that if the Lord returned I might have so much in my possession as would make me "ashamed before Him at His coming," I unloaded some of it on other people, sending it as gifts to the Lord's work, where I thought it was most needed. But the fact that He sent me so much just before the time when I would specially need it, was a precious evidence of His constant care.

One of the delights of Mardin is the extensive view obtained over the Mesopotamian plain, which, from its absolute flatness, must at one time have been covered with water. Standing in the streets, and looking across to where, seventy-five miles away, a low range of hills is to be seen, it is easy to imagine that one is at a seaside town. The soil on the plain is of a peculiar purple colour and extremely fertile. The first harvests are usually gathered in the month of May. Villages are to be seen dotted about the plain, but the population seems comparatively scarce and the district is infested with robbers.

A few weeks before my arrival, one of the missionaries had been held up and robbed not far from the town, and during the month of March of this year an American lady and gentleman, who were caught by brigands whilst out in its vicinity, had a very unpleasant experience.

After walking for an hour and a half they found themselves on the edge of the plain, when they were suddenly held up by five armed Koords, members of the Hamidieh, and followers of a notorious Hamidieh captain. The brigands demanded money, and seizing their captives, removed their shoes and a few other outside articles. It is impossible to say how far they would have gone. Fortunately the lady, not knowing how efficacious the word "doctor" would prove, threatened that she would

tell Dr. Thom of the robbery. This name acted like magic, for no sooner had she uttered it than the men threw back the things they had taken and mounting their horses galloped away.

Those who desire adventure should find in Turkey ample scope for fulfilling their ambitions. I one day watched a caravan leaving the town on its way to Ourfa by the direct route which skirts the plain and is therefore extremely dangerous. It had not gone many miles before being attacked and robbed. A woman, who was carrying a bag containing one hundred pounds in gold, fortunately managed to drop it unobserved into some long grass ere she was searched by the brigands.

Whilst I was in Mardin news came of the fright which a lady had experienced whilst touring in the neighbouring district in company with a missionary. They arrived one night at a certain village and occupied rooms in adjoining houses. Towards midnight a message came to the missionary from the head official demanding that he should immediately proceed to another part of the village for an interview on a matter of great urgency. The missionary hastened off, and after being kept waiting for a long time, discovered that the subject regarding which the chief wanted to speak to him was one of no importance. Apparently he had been decoyed away from his lodgings, for, soon after he left them, the lady, who had retired to rest for the night, heard a great pounding on the door of the house in which she was sleeping and Turkish officials angrily demanding that she should open it. Presently the noise ceased, and she thought they had gone away, when to her intense alarm she heard footsteps on the roof, and in a moment the door leading from it was forced open and several men came along the passage towards her room. Hastily jumping out of bed she just reached the door in time to

prevent the entrance of a Turkish officer, who, after some parleying, was persuaded to depart.

On leaving Mardin for Diarbekir, I found myself for the first time on a made carriage road, which, though not by any means perfect, was a great advance on the rock-strewn tracks previously traversed. It is a two days' journey ; on the first we had a severe thunderstorm, and on the second I passed a tent pitched by the roadside. On enquiring the reason of its being there, I was told the following story :—

A few days previously, two men, with a considerable amount of gold on them, had been travelling that way. As night was falling they were chased by robbers ; one was caught, and whilst he was being searched, the other man, who was making across country, having put a considerable distance between himself and the brigands, hastily dug a hole in the ground with his foot and, unobserved by his pursuers, placed in it T£80 in gold, afterwards covering it up in such a manner that it might not be noticed. He then continued his running, and succeeded in making good his escape. Next morning on returning to look for his money he was unable to find the spot where it was buried, and after a fruitless search had pitched a tent in the vicinity and employed five or six men to try and discover its whereabouts.

On the evening of the day upon which I passed this party I arrived at Diarbekir, and, having left the Syrian zone, found myself once more amongst Armenians.

CHAPTER XV

DANGERS AND DIFFICULTIES

A SQUARE-BUILT, walled city, situated on the crest of an eminence, Diarbekir reminds one of the old days when the safety of a city depended entirely on the strength of its encircling ramparts and battlements.

The town contains no mission station, the only Europeans I saw in it, besides the British Vice-Consul, being a German doctor and his helpers, who do good medical work amongst the natives. There is, however, a fine Armenian church, taken charge of by a native pastor, in which it had been arranged for me to hold some services.

On arriving at the gates of the town, my passport was examined, and on entering I was faced with the difficulty of finding a lodging.

Many of the church members would have gladly received me into their homes, had it not been for my nationality, which made it too risky for them to do so. They knew the Turks so well that they feared punishment might afterwards fall upon them if they gave hospitality to a British subject. The majority were even afraid to walk with me along any streets in which we were likely to be observed by Moslem officials.

Ostracised in this way, and feeling therefore as though I had some hideous leprosy clinging to me, I finally found refuge in an empty house, one room of which I occupied,

going for my meals by a devious and roundabout route—in order to avoid the observance of Turkish officials—to the houses of Armenians, who supplied me with food.

The houses in the town are all built of a porous black stone, which seems to be peculiar to this district. The dogs in the streets seem to have been greatly influenced by their environment, for they are nearly all of the same colour. These scavengers, who are found in all Turkish towns, live and sleep in the streets, will eat almost anything, and by disposing of refuse are doubtless very useful in the prevention of disease. One meets them, not by ones or twos but by dozens, often lying full length across the path or in the roadway, heedless of the traffic which is passing beside them. It is said that the dogs have each their own particular streets and combine to oust any luckless intruder who enters their domains. They are very different from the house dogs found in the villages, which are generally very fierce and large, and trained to attack men.

The blackness of the stones and the dogs is well reflected by the attitude of many of the officials in this town, who look upon the Christians with extreme disfavour and suspicion. At the time of the massacres, there was for three days terrible loss of life and property. "Much of the market was burned; all was looted. People fled over the roofs from one quarter to another, or dug holes through from one house to another, and so escaped. One of these apertures in a wall was not dug large enough, for an enormously fat woman whom her friends were determined to save; so they pushed and pulled, and finally crowded her through, a process which, under any other circumstances, would have been thought thoroughly cruel."

One woman tells of how she begged her husband not to leave home that first day, because things looked ominous. He went; she waited and watched and spent

that night alone in tears, but he never returned. There are stories of miraculous escapes, and there are others of murder and cruelty which are too awful to write. Many beautiful women and girls, captured at that time by the Koords, are still held in a bondage which is worse than imprisonment. Hundreds were killed, and subsequently an unsuccessful attempt has been made to organize a further massacre.

Just before my arrival, however, a new Vali had been appointed—an enlightened man, who, I believe, really did his utmost to secure protection of life and property both for Christians and Moslems, and who sought to govern with justice and equity. I cannot do better than give one or two instances, shewing the way in which he attempted this and the difficulties he had to contend with.

One day I called to see him. He was seated at a table in European style, and whilst I was there, an officer entered to report an excess committed by a notorious robber in the region of Nisibis.

“Take soldiers, and go and capture him,” said the Vali; “if possible, take him alive, but if not, shoot him.”

On receiving this command the officer requested some money to cover expenses, and an order for it was at once given him.

One thing which the Vali tried to do was to ensure the safety of caravans travelling to the coast. On leaving the town they had to pass through a district which was the happy plundering ground of a Koordish chief, Ibrahim Pasha and his fraternity, who usually had an agent in the city to report to them the value of goods carried by each party of travellers that left it.

Shortly after the Vali had taken up office, the report was brought in that a caravan had been robbed in this area. He immediately sent telegrams ordering soldiers and zabtiehs to concentrate at the place where the attack had been made, follow the brigands, and recover the

booty. The zabtiehs, to their astonishment, were instructed to fire their guns; and some of them, never having received such an order before, were at first afraid to obey. The party sent in pursuit of the robbers overtook them, shot several, and in addition to getting back the spoil, captured several of the brigands' horses. One of these was a very fine Arab mare which had been ridden by a nephew of Ibrahim Pasha. The Vali gave instructions that this animal was to be sold by auction, and Ibrahim, hearing of this, sent a man into the town to buy it. Information of this was carried to the Vali, who sent to arrest the would-be purchaser, but he escaped from the city in time to avoid capture.

The horse really became a "white elephant"; everyone feared to buy it, lest it should be afterwards taken from them by the Koordish chief, and it was finally knocked down to the British Consul for a nominal sum. I saw this mare soon after its purchase.

At the time I was in the town, the Vali received a congratulatory telegram from the Sultan. His activities in repressing violence and robbery, however, appear to have very soon roused the enmity of the brigand chief in his district, who saw himself being deprived of the means of livelihood, and, although I cannot state so authentically, I have reason for believing that Ibrahim Pasha sent a complaint to the Sultan regarding the new order of things instituted by the Vali, accompanying the complaint with a handsome present. Consequently, when, some weeks later, the Vali was travelling through the district in order to examine things which required improvement, he received a very curt message from the Sultan, asking him why he had left the town and practically telling him to limit his activities, and leave things as he had found them.

One man who went from the district to lay a complaint before the Sultan, regarding the Koordish chief, was,

when duly ushered into that monarch's presence, asked where he came from.

"From the the district of Severek," he replied; then, before he had time to say anything further, the Sultan asked him: "How is my son, Ibrahim Pasha?"

After the Sultan had used this term regarding the robber chief, the man did not dare to make any complaint against him.

Thus the ruler of Turkey, an adept in Eastern craftiness, plays a double game: the officials pay him highly in order to secure their appointments, the Koordish chiefs, it is believed, bribe him to wink at their little failings in the way of robbery and violence, and, whilst this state of things continues, it is useless to expect the country to prosper. Whilst the Sultan receives money from the two opposite elements of his empire—the official, and the one whom the official should hold in check—it is impossible that safe conditions should prevail. He pulls the strings in such a manner, that, whichever way the wind blows, the dust falls into his pocket; whilst, of necessity, through whichever of the two channels it may reach him, the Christians have to supply the bulk of it.

I engaged an Armenian to travel with me to Ourfa. He was a young man and I suppose, like many others, anxious, if possible, to escape from the country; for, after proceeding for about a mile, we came upon a group of relatives and friends, hidden behind a wall, who had come to say good-bye to him. It is rather common for them to wait on the road in this way, as saying farewell in the city is apt to arouse the suspicions of the Turk. He dismounted, and was tenderly prayed over, ere we again set forth.

Two or three hours' journeying had brought us sufficiently far from the town for it to be reckoned that we were in the dangerous zone, when I heard a horse galloping behind me, this noise being intermingled with loud calls

and cries. Turning, I saw a wild, fierce man coming full speed towards me. He was mounted on a fiery Arab horse, was armed to the teeth, and as his horse, from the trappings of which many tassels were hanging, came nearer, I saw a huge scimitar dangling at his side. I waited for him, inwardly wondering whether he had been sent by the Vali to call me back, or whether he intended to despatch me on the spot. With wild shouts and gesticulations he approached, and I then learned that he was merely the owner of the horses I had hired, and this show of bravado was an attempt to intimidate me into returning one of the horses, which he affirmed I was not entitled to. I rode on and said nothing, so, finally, seeing that I was not to be bullied into returning it, he calmed down and apologised for his behaviour. It was a strange sample of Turkish character. If Turks cannot impress you with their own importance, they usually become impressed with yours.

On leaving Diarbekir, I was obliged to travel on what is known as "grass." During about six weeks of the year, there is sufficient grass growing on the roadside to enable the men to feed the horses without buying barley. It is a most uncomfortable way of journeying, for the animals, not getting their usual amount of nourishment, it is necessary to call a halt every four or five hours in order to give them an opportunity of a further feed. One is fortunate, under these circumstances, if able to secure three hours' continuous sleep during the twenty-four. In vain, I offered to pay the cost of barley; a whole large caravan was travelling on grass; it had been arranged for us to join it, and it was not safe to do otherwise. So I had to be content with turning out of bed at one o'clock in the morning, and tumbling into the saddle whilst still half asleep.

In the small town of Severek I had heard that there was a native pastor, so arranged to stay there for services.

On riding into the school-yard, I was met by the pastor, and it was arranged that I should sleep in one of the class-rooms—a large upper apartment with windows on either side. The stench in this town was horrible. Half-open sewers ran down the centres of the streets, there was no water to carry the refuse away, and a broiling sun did not improve conditions. In order to try and render the smell less oppressive I had all the windows shut; this did not better matters much; so I learnt some specially strong Turkish and went to call upon the kymerkum in order to make some remarks on bad sanitation. Unfortunately for me, he was not at home.

The windows of the room in which I slept, had had the iron bars, which are usually placed across windows in these parts, wrenched from them at the time of the massacre. Ere going to bed, my attention was called to a ghastly spectacle. The walls had at some remote period been white-washed, and a number of spots and splashes were pointed out to me upon them. Then I was told that a massacre had taken place in this apartment.

“We crowded in here,” said one, who had been present at that awful scene of carnage. “Our pastor and many of the Christians came until the room was full. Then the Turks followed and slashed us with their swords until the floor was covered with blood and corpses, and we were all thought to be dead.”

My informant next proceeded to identify different splashes of blood as belonging to various friends, who had died in the places where these were. Then pointing to some of them over the head of my bed, he said, “Our pastor died there; that is his blood.”

I was left alone to spend the night surrounded by these gruesome evidences of unspeakable barbarity, which seemed, as night darkened around me, to stand out with greater boldness, until on each splash was written, as though with letters of fire, that old, old

question so often asked, and which had haunted me throughout my travels : " Why does England leave us in this condition ? "

With that question still unanswered, I at last fell asleep. When I awoke the sun was shining, but the blood marks were still there to mock me with their clamouring query, and I was glad when the time arrived for me to leave that ghastly spectacle and go and conduct the services in the church. This was a fine building, and I had an appreciative and attentive audience.

Continuing my journey, I still had to travel on " grass," stopping whenever the animals were tired, which obliged one sometimes to sleep out in the open. I remember one evening, after everything had been pretty well drenched in a thunderstorm, having to camp out in this way. All the party were cold and badly in need of a cup of hot tea, but our sticks were damp and would not light, therefore we could not kindle the charcoal in the *samovar*. I rummaged amongst my things, and finally discovered some old copies of the *The Christian*, and this periodical certainly did good service that night, for with these and the grease obtained from some candle ends, I at last lighted the charcoal and rejoiced the party by serving them with hot tea.

Day was breaking as, after travelling all night, we arrived at the historic city of Ourfa, once known as Edessa, and famous as having been the residence of King Abgar, an Armenian monarch, who is believed to have sent a letter to our Lord Jesus Christ asking Him to heal him of a certain disease. The following is a translation of this letter, as given by Eusebius, Bishop of Cesarea, an early historian of the Church, who flourished in the fourth century :—

" Abgarus, King of Edessa, to Jesus the good Saviour, who appeareth at Jerusalem, greeting.

" I have been informed concerning Thee and Thy

cures, which are performed without the use of medicines or of herbs. For it is reported that Thou dost cause the blind to see, the lame to walk, that Thou dost cleanse the lepers, and dost cast out unclean spirits and devils, and dost restore to health those who have been long diseased, and also that Thou dost raise the dead. All of which when I heard I was persuaded of one of these two things : either that Thou art God Himself descended from heaven ; or that Thou art the Son of God. On this account, therefore, I have written unto Thee, earnestly desiring that Thou wouldst trouble Thyself to take a journey hither, and that Thou wilt also cure me of the disease under which I suffer. For I hear that the Jews hold Thee in derision, and intend to do Thee harm. My city is indeed small, but it is sufficient to contain us both."

Legend also asserts that the following answer to this Epistle, written by St. Thomas the Apostle, was sent to the Armenian King by Our Lord :—

"Happy art thou, O Abgarus, forasmuch as thou hast believed in Me whom thou hast not seen. For it is written concerning Me, that those who have seen Me have not believed on Me, that those who have not seen Me might believe and live. As to that part of thine epistle which relates to My visiting thee, I must inform thee that I must fulfil the ends of My mission in this land, and after that be received up again unto Him that sent Me ; but after My ascension I will send one of My disciples, who will cure thy disease, and give life unto thee and all that are with thee."

It is said, that soon after our Lord's ascension, a disciple named Addai visited Edessa, and that in answer to his prayers the King was healed and afterwards converted. If this be true, he was probably the first monarch to accept Christianity, and Edessa may justly be proud of him.

There are in the town—which tradition asserts is identical with Ur of the Chaldees from which place Abraham set out for the land of Canaan,—many evidences still remaining of the early Church, which, although it has passed through times of great persecution and peril, still survives. Standing in a conspicuous position near its centre is a high tower built of stone, and dating back many centuries. At one time it was the spire of a Christian church, which has been destroyed, the remnants of its capitals and bases now lie around the mosque of which it has been made the minaret. There is a graveyard at its foot with upright tombstones, which mark it as the burying-place of Moslems, for Christians must always have their tombstones flat.

There is also a famous pool in the town crowded with fish, which are regarded as sacred, and which is known to this day as Abraham's Pool. Just before my arrival in the town, whilst laying the foundation of a large khan, some workmen discovered a tomb, on the side of which, cleverly executed in mosaic, were six portraits of its occupants with their names. The women are represented unveiled, and the work is not later than the sixth century. On a centre panel the following is written in old Syriac characters :—

“I, Aphtusa, son of Garmu, have constructed for myself this house of eternity, for myself, my children and my heirs, for the days of eternity.”

In the town of Ourfa, after the first massacre, which took place on 28th October, 1895, there was a reign of terror. For many weeks the Turks went from house to house with threats of vengeance on those who did not become Moslems. The Armenians were fortunate in having a very fine countryman of theirs as pastor at this time. “For over twenty-five years this man laboured amid many trials and difficulties, but with the constant blessing of the Lord.” In order to fit himself for the

ministry he had studied in America and Germany, and had secured funds in Europe for the building of a church. During all the time succeeding this first massacre, the pastor was a tower of strength to the people, comforting them in their woes and trying to secure relief for their distress. He was greatly beloved.

Another massacre followed on December 28th and 29th, during which probably eight thousand people were killed. There is a very large Gregorian Church in the town, with walls and roof of stone, and, thinking this a safe place of refuge from the wrath of the mob, some three thousand people congregated there. The scene inside this Church is well described by Miss Alcock, in *By Far Euphrates*, as follows:

“ People were pouring in, filling the vast spaces of the Church till scarce standing room remained. At last the great iron door swung to, and was shut.

“ Not one moment too soon. The mob was already thundering at it. The yells and howls of the frenzied crowd outside mingled with the cries and groans of the terrified crowd within. At the same time shots came in through the windows, wounding some and killing others.

At last the storm prevailed, the iron door smashed in, and then the work of murder began in earnest. But the very density of the crowd of victims checked its progress. It was hard to cut through that mass of living flesh. Some Turk, mounted on a bench or stone, saw a face in the crowd he knew—that of a young Armenian singer, whose sweet voice was already winning him gold and glory, and who was a special favourite with the Moslems. He and others called to him by name. The youth sprang upon a pedestal, and in a minor key, with a voice of exquisite pathos and melody, began a plaintive Armenian song.

Then a strange thing was seen and heard—there were tears on Moslem faces, and sobs that broke from

Moslem breasts. This would not do! Guns were pointed at the too successful singer. "Stop!" cried the voice of one having authority. "Dear youth, be a Moslem. We will save you alive, and give you wealth and honour, as much as you will."

"*Never!*" The dauntless word rang through the church, sweeter than melody of harp or lute, sweeter than voice of song. It was the young singer's last utterance—the end came then, for him.

The work of death went on, the murderers hewing a way for themselves through the crowded aisles. Meanwhile, in the vast gallery, which ran quite round the building, the terrified multitude, mostly women and children, shrieked and wept and prayed, calling aloud on the name of Jesus. A few men tried to climb out through the windows; but this was impossible, and would have been useless, for the mob were waiting outside with firearms to pick off the fugitives. And now the Moslems had reached the altar. Some of them sprang upon it, while others tore the pictures, smashed the woodwork, and broke open anything they thought might contain treasure.

There was on the reading-desk a large, beautiful, and very ancient Bible, bound and clasped with silver. With a yell of triumph, a Moslem seized it, tore out the leaves, and flung down the desecrated volume. "Now, Prophet Jesus," he shouted, "save Thine own if Thou canst! Show Thyself stronger than Mahomet!"

Shooting was both too expensive and too slow a way of killing these multitudes. The Turks brought rugs, mattresses, and other inflammable material, which they piled up on the floor of the church, then, after pouring kerosene over it, set it on fire. The flames arose; the crowd in the gallery saw the awful fate prepared for them, and one wild, wailing shriek of terror drowned every other noise.

Turks, meanwhile, were rushing up the gallery stairs, seizing the younger women and girls, and carrying them out." Many, rather than suffer their daughters to be captured for Moslem harems, threw them from the gallery into the flames below.

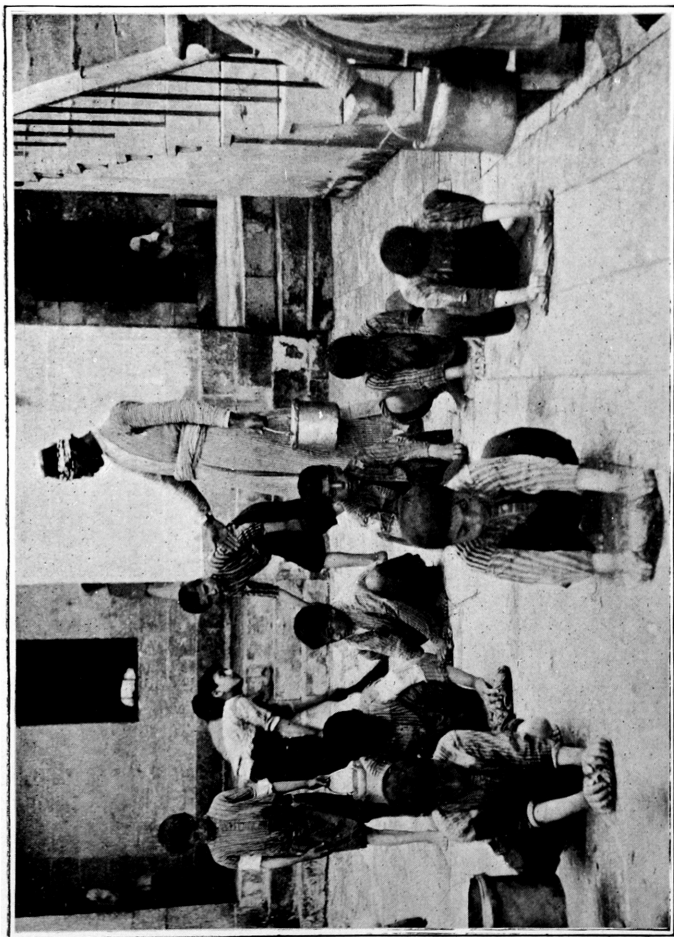
In this massacre the pastor was killed. When the Turks saw him they said, "Here is Abouhaatian; we must make an end of him." He asked for his life for the sake of his six children, but, seeing that they would not spare him, said, "Do not touch me here; I will come to you." While he was going he was shot dead, and some think that the bullet came from a friendly Turk who wished to spare him the greater pain of being hacked to pieces by the swords of the mob. His eldest daughter, about eighteen years of age, calm and brave, saw his body put on an animal and carried off for burial.

The following letter, written by her shortly afterwards describes her experiences of this terrible time:—

"Saturday morning, after family prayers, my father went to see Miss Shattuck. After an hour he returned home and carefully closing the door behind him, he kissed us all tenderly. I saw by his face that something had happened and so said, "Father, what is the matter?" and just then I heard fearful cries and awful sounds in the streets. Father said, "Don't be alarmed; we will go over to Dr. Kivork's." So leaving everything we quickly went over the flat roofs to that house. Fifty men were there, who hid themselves as best they could. The Turks came, having all kinds of weapons red with blood. They saw my father and asked him to preach to them, and then they shot him through the heart. They killed over forty-five men in that one place. As soon as possible I ran to my father. Before he died he said, "Fear not, the Lord is with you. I have no fear, for I am going to my dear Saviour"; and then he closed his eyes. O my *seralee* (my dear), I sat there in my grief

and all the world was dark, blank. Other Moslems came and drove us all to a great mosque. While going many of the young girls were taken by the Turks, and I just escaped being carried away to a harem. After remaining in the mosque three days, Miss S. sent soldiers, who found us naked, and we were taken to her home and she prepared clothing for us, and we were hungry and she gave us meat. How hard it is for us to be without our beloved father! We have lost all, home, father; yet I thank Him that in such trials He has brought me nearer Him."

The massacre has left its mark upon the town. In this lonely out-station one or two missionary ladies are obliged to manage everything. Miss Shattuck, who cared for many during that time, still does heroic work, and from six in the morning until after nine o'clock at night, is continually endeavouring to cope with the multitudinous duties which crowd upon her. On the morning of my arrival I was met by her at the door of the missionary compound, and, tired with travelling, was glad to be shown to a room where I could have a few hours' rest.



ORPHANS WASHING THE MISSION COURTYARD AT OURFA.

CHAPTER XVI

OURFA TO THE COAST

THE sun was intensely hot, the sky clear and cloudless, and although not much time had passed since the sounding of the gong, which was beaten at about five o'clock every morning to awaken the orphans, there was an oppressive sultriness in the air, which made one long for rain. Inside the mission house I was seated at an early breakfast with Miss Shattuck and her colleague Miss Chambers, when a shuffling of feet was heard on the stones outside accompanied by the sound of voices, these noises increasing in volume as the meal proceeded, until Miss Shattuck, hardly stopping to finish it, went out to commence the business of the day.

I followed her into the courtyard, whose white stones carefully scrubbed by orphan hands, seemed to burn beneath one's feet in the rays of the morning sun. In its centre a few green shrubs lent a touch of freshness to the scene, which was enlivened by a crowd of women and girls who swarmed around the missionary lady. They were neatly but poorly clad, and each one fondly held in her hands a tiny piece of lace. All were seeking employment, and these were the samples of their work. Quickly the candidates were sorted out, some who had been accepted gladly going off to commence work in the building, where dozens of women are employed on handkerchiefs, others, who had been hoping to earn a little

bread, being scarcely able to repress their tears when told that they must wait awhile, until more proficient.

A large industrial work is carried on at Ourfa under the superintendence of the missionaries, and it has been a God-send to the people, many of whom, but for this, must have perished of hunger. Employment has been, and is being, found in this way for hundreds of widows and orphan girls. Many do embroidery in their own homes, whilst most of the white work, such as the edging of handkerchiefs, is done in a building provided for that purpose, where I conducted services whilst the women and girls were at work.

One Saturday afternoon I set out with Miss Shattuck to climb a neighbouring mountain, at the top of which a picnic had been organized by the members of the Christian Endeavour Band. How strange it seemed! Here in the centre of Turkey, close to a town where rivers of blood had been shed, the children of those martyrs were still testifying to the power of Christ to save. It was a happy time. Usually the singing of these people was sadly plaintive, so I announced and taught them a bright verse, which had been translated into their own tongue. Lustily they joined in and sang :

“Life, life, eternal life,
Jesus alone is the giver,
Life, life, abundant life,
Glory to Jesus for ever.”

I afterwards addressed a united meeting of all the Christian Endeavourers in the town. There must have been close upon five hundred present, and all had, I believe, taken the full pledge.

As we rode down the mountain-side in the cool of the evening, a messenger met us bearing bad tidings. In the yard of the mission premises a high iron tripod surmounted by a wheel had been erected over a well for the

purpose of raising water. In a sudden gale of wind this had blown down, falling across the roofs on which, a few hours later, the orphan children would have been sleeping. Fortunately no one was hurt. The tripod was badly damaged, but was soon re-erected.

In addition to the Armenian, there is also a Syrian Protestant Church in the town. In both of these I had services, and also addressed a large men's meeting under the portico of the Gregorian Church where the three thousand had been burnt to death.

Journeying, as I was, from the interior towards the coast, one noticed at Ourfa a faint tinge of civilization. There are khans in the city, for caravans and travellers to stay at, far more commodious than anything in the more remote districts, there are one or two cafes where men sit, drinking and chatting; otherwise, however, everything seems wholly Oriental. In moving towards the coast, I found also, that the nearer I came to it, the larger and more flourishing the work of the Protestant Churches seemed to be, which is accounted for, no doubt, by the fact that they had been established for a longer time. Another noticeable feature is the fact that as one approaches those towns which, by their proximity to the coast, are more accessible to Europeans, the amount of open oppression and violence seems to diminish.

Whilst in Ourfa a most amusing story of official ignorance was told. An English lady, whose Christian name was Victoria, and who happened to live in Princes Gardens, had recently visited the town. As these names to the Turkish mind denoted royalty, they had concluded that she was a daughter of Queen Victoria, consequently she arrived in the town carefully guarded by about a dozen zabtiehs. The mutaserif, who was the leading official in the place, at once sent her an invitation to stay a few days with him, which she declined; whereupon he sent to her tent an extravagant dinner of about

twelve courses. I believe he was afterwards enlightened regarding his mistake.

I felt the heat extremely whilst in Ourfa, and was sometimes so exhausted that I had to sit down when addressing a meeting. Unknown to myself, a fever was coming on, and I now feel intensely grateful to God, that ere it reached its worst stage I was able to leave this very hot town for a cooler one, in which the mission station was situated outside the city, amidst quiet surroundings.

On a certain Sunday night my work finished in Ourfa, and I had arranged to wait until the following Thursday, in order to have the company of others on the journey to Aintab. I then heard that a few of the natives had suddenly decided to leave on the Monday. It seems now as though this had been divinely arranged for my benefit, as otherwise I would have been laid up in Ourfa, and this would have been much more likely to have brought about a fatal termination to my illness, besides which it would have been much more inconvenient to the missionaries, who in this town are not so well equipped for dealing with sickness as at Aintab.

In order to avoid both heat and robbers, it was arranged that we should travel by night and obtain what rest was possible during the day. On the Monday morning I accordingly hired two horses to convey myself and load to Aintab. Then the fever commenced, my temperature rose, and I felt too exhausted to start. Unable to cancel the bargain for the horses, I tried to get others to use them but without success. Later the kind missionary lady, who had so often ministered relief to other sufferers, brought me up a cup of tea and I decided to start, a thing which, thinking I only had a touch of malaria, I had been loath to do. At about five o'clock, making a supreme effort, I got into the saddle and rode to the spot, a mile away, where the usual little group had congregated to say farewell.

I will not describe in detail the incidents of the journey, which was a very exhausting one. Sometimes at night I would ride ahead with the zabtieh; then, holding my horse with one hand, lie down on the hillside and, with my head on a stone, snatch a few minutes sleep, ere the tingling of the bells told us that the others had caught us up. At one time when riding ahead I noticed the zabtieh left the road, and thinking he had a reason for doing so, I followed. On and on he went, and at last I called out to him and found he was asleep. He had no idea where the road was, but, fortunately, I was able to lead him back to it. On our second day, after resting for a time at a khan at Biredjik we crossed the Euphrates—on the banks of which this town is situated—in a V-shaped punt which was so arranged that one could ride into it without dismounting. Arrived at the other side, we passed several robbers, seated in the shade of a large tree who were doubtless watching for suitable prey.

We had crossed the river in the afternoon, and that evening, after riding over ground thickly covered with locusts, arrived at a village where I was told that a halt of a few hours would be made, and that the journey would be resumed at midnight. In order to save the time and trouble necessary to unpack my bedding, I laid down on a native quilt provided at the khan, but this contained so much undesirable company that I eventually sought refuge on the roof, where I tried to obtain a few hours rest. Spreading my mackintosh on the ground I laid down, but being very cold and finding towards midnight that no stir was being made, and noticing that the natives of my party sleeping on the roof had got their bedding out, I roused one of them, only to discover that a start was not to be made until the following morning. Then we hunted for the horse driver and found him reposing on the stones at the entrance to the

yard. He got my bedding out and I had a comfortable sleep.

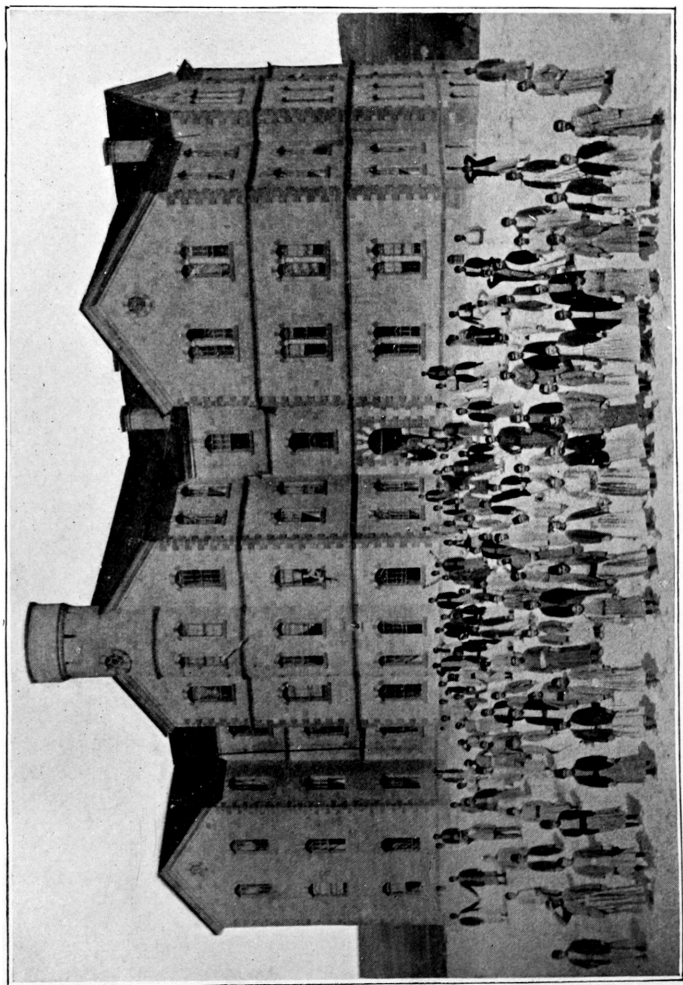
Arriving at Aintab I stayed in the house of Mrs. Fuller. In the same house lived Messrs. Sanders and Merrill, two of the missionaries, and I have to thank all its inmates, as well as Dr. Shepard and Dr. Piper for their very kind care and attention during a protracted illness, which appeared to be a complication of enteric and malaria.

On the Sunday night following that on which I had finished the work at Ourfa, I went to bed at Aintab and did not rise from it until thirteen weeks later, during part of which time I was unconscious and for three days not expected to live. The house in which I was, was beautifully situated in the grounds of the college, about half a mile from the town, and adjoining it stood Dr. Shepard's house, in which it had been providentially arranged that Dr. Piper should reside during his absence from Aleppo for holiday.

I found, whilst travelling, that malaria prevailed throughout almost all the country. Its severity appeared to vary in different localities, but I heard of very few deaths as the direct result of it. The only distinctly tropical disease met with is Asiatic cholera, and with regard to this disease experience has proved that it is not good to let the patient have any food while the attack lasts. Aleppo button, an unpleasant sore which often remains for one year, is not only found in the town called by that name, but throughout the surrounding districts. It is thought to be caused by the bite of an insect.

I never met with mosquitoes in any great number. A much more troublesome insect is the sandfly, which, though resembling a mosquito in shape, is so small and light in colour as to be almost invisible. Its bite is about as irritating as that of a mosquito, but it is thought that it does not convey malaria.

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AINTAB COLLEGE, WITH STUDENTS IN FOREGROUND.

Aintab has a flourishing mission station, and here one sees work at its best; there are three large Protestant Churches in the town, also a school, hospital, and dispensary. Situated on a hill a little way out is an orphanage in charge of Miss Frearson, and during convalescence I visited it and held one or two services.

The college is one of the five institutions founded in Turkey under the American Board for the purpose of giving a higher education to Armenians. These high educational institutions are the direct outgrowth of the demands of the evangelistic work. It is an interesting fact that the colleges pay a considerable proportion of their annual expenses by fees received from the students. The Board have also at Constantinople a college for giving a higher education to girls. The education of women has greatly improved their position in Turkey. Half a century ago only one in 30,000 could read, but now a marked change has come over the condition of things in this respect.

In the Aintab college there are about 150 students. The hospital is greatly appreciated, and includes amongst its patients Armenians, Turks, Arabs, Koords, Syrians and Jews.

One of the leading pastors in the town, Rev. M. G. Papazian, once had a narrow escape whilst returning from an evening meeting to his home in the college campus. At the entrance of the outer grounds a number of men, armed with clubs and knives, and having at least one pistol amongst them, sprang out from a hiding place and attempted to rob him and the young men who were escorting him to his house. In the scuffle that ensued two pistol shots were fired at the pastor, and some of the young men were slightly cut and bruised. Fortunately, the noise of the *mêlée* was heard at the college gate-house, lights were shown, and the voices of friends hastening to the rescue frightened the robbers away ere very serious harm had been done.

A few mornings later the body of a Christian young man, with his throat cut and quite dead, was found lying in the road some ten minutes west of the college grounds. The way in which the murderer was discovered is very remarkable.

A Koordish woman living in the town took her child to the hospital for a serious surgical operation necessary to save its life, and after a good deal of bargaining paid the required fee. The operation was successfully performed, and the child, under the care of its mother and the hospital nurse, was making a rapid recovery, when, on the second day after the murder, a visitor called to see the woman and child. Soon after his arrival he asked the woman whether there was anyone present who understood Koordish, and on being assured that there was not, he immediately began to cordially congratulate the woman on a piece of rare good fortune, telling her that, although she had been obliged to pay a large sum to the hospital for the treatment of her child, her son had just had the good luck to kill a Giaour on whose body he found a much larger sum of money than she had spent. Providentially, the patient occupying the bed next to that of the child understood Koordish, and was able to give information which enabled the authorities to arrest the murderer. An abundant proof of his guilt was found in his possession.

The power of the Word of God to take root of itself has been signally manifested in the history of the Aintab churches. Long before the advent of missionaries, Bibles came, and were eagerly received. Shortly before my arrival the power of the Word of God had again been remarkably felt throughout the town, a religious awakening having occurred of such importance as to attract the attention of the Government.

The missionaries, who for many years had been sowing the good seed, felt that the time had come when some

more definite blessing and fruit might be expected. Without in any way seeking to alter the church adherence of the people, they encouraged them to read the Bible in their own homes, as a result of which little groups were formed for studying it. These increased in number until there were in all about fifty of them, and a number of conversions took place. The Gregorian Church opposed the movement, which was discussed by them at Constantinople, with the result that an order was given for somewhat severe measures to be taken against those who attended such gatherings. The work and interest spread, however, and at the college and the girls' seminary, meetings were held every morning during a universal week of prayer, as well as at each of the churches. On the Saturday of that week, the students in the college held a prayer meeting which lasted for over four hours, the time being filled with testimony, surrender, prayer and song. Transformations were wrought in many by the Spirit of God within a few minutes, and they entered upon a new life. A similar work broke out in the other institutions connected with the mission station; meetings, which sometimes lasted till midnight, were continued every evening at the churches. At these many startling confessions were made by those who professed Christianity; the pastor of one church received during this period over three hundred pounds "conscience money," which people wished him to return for them, and the change brought about with the revival became the talk of the market place. Hundreds were converted as a result of this work.

One of the marked features of the religious awakening, both in this city and others which I visited, was the manner in which the people sought to make restitution, and to put right past misdeeds. In one town, whilst I was seated in my room late at night, a man entered and asked me to send for a certain missionary.

He then confessed to having stolen a pistol from him many years previously. In another, a man brought me a large shuttle which he had stolen from the Government. He was afraid to return it himself. The Turks would not have understood such an action, and would probably have plundered his house under the impression that his other belongings had also been stolen from them. He asked me to give it back to them, but this would have brought suspicion on me, and the Consul advised against it, so it was finally left for the native pastor to return.

Whilst convalescing from my illness a scourge of cholera visited the district. For a time the efforts made to keep it out of the town were successful, but one day it was reported that a man who had arrived in the city was dying from this dread disease. He was asked how it was that he had been able to enter without passing through quarantine, and confessed, ere he passed away, that he had bribed the officers in order that he might escape it.

After this, several died from cholera every day. It is a very awkward scourge, and ignorance of its treatment and period of incubation, often leads to unpleasant and unnecessary detention. A missionary having returned from a journey was once informed, two days after reaching his home, that he must go back and pass his quarantine. In vain he protested that there was no cholera or quarantine on the road which he had travelled and that sufficient time had elapsed to show that he was not infected. Still the officials demanded his return. Finally an agreement was made, though very ungraciously on the part of the officials, that he should pass the usual time of quarantine—ten days—in his own house. Twenty soldiers were brought to the place and kept guard, though after a time their number was decreased. Later a bill was presented for eleven pounds, the cost of the quarantine.

After being laid up for five months at Aintab, I was at

last pronounced well enough to make the journey of three and a half days to Alexandretta, the coast town from which I had arranged to sail for home. Dr. Shepard kindly accompanied me on this journey. We travelled in a covered spring wagon which was fairly comfortable, and on arriving at our stopping place for the first night, were informed that as we had come from an infected town we would have to remain outside in the drenching rain for the whole of the night. After darkness had fallen, however, we succeeded in getting the officials to allow us to proceed to the schoolroom, where we passed the night.

We halted the following evening at a Koordish village. In the semi-darkness of a recess formed by sacks of grain, etc., which were stacked in the room, we were asked to seat ourselves, and at once set about the preparation of food. After our repast, which consisted of tongue chopped up and cooked with eggs, our hospitable host insisted on washing the dishes. He instructed his wife to bring a vessel and she brought a heavy copper one of enormous size, such as is used when washing clothes. Then with a cloth and a piece of soap she assiduously commenced to scour our two solitary plates, her husband sitting beside her and carefully giving her instructions. After each spoon and fork had been washed he gingerly held it up whilst she poured clean water over it. On retiring to rest for the night this Koord with his wife and an old man, occupied the same room as ourselves, sleeping on the other side of the partition formed by the sacks.

The following night we spent at a proper khan prettily situated at the base of wooded hills. In the morning we passed on the road a party of Bulgarian prisoners who were being marched up into the interior. Then, towards noon, on passing over a range of hills, the welcome sight of the calm blue ocean greeted me. After looking for

months on burnt up vegetation, on arid plains, or white dusty roads, it was refreshing to the eyes to see once more, this blue expanse, and to observe riding at anchor, in front of the little town for which we were making as we drove down the hillside, a vessel flying the British flag.

We were stopped on the road for examination by the quarantine officer, who duly disinfected us by fetching a small blue bottle from his house and pouring over our hands a liquid, not unlike water, either in appearance or taste.

The steamer was leaving that night, and in the evening I went on board, glad to find myself once more under a flag which is an emblem of liberty wherever it flies. By my experiences in Turkey I had learnt to value as never before the privilege and the blessing of having been born beneath it, but, at the same time, I had more than once, as I looked upon the sufferings of my fellow Christians in Armenia, had occasion to feel ashamed of my nation.

I was so weak as scarcely to be able to walk, but though I had suffered through my experiences, I had little to regret, for I had cause to know that, to at least some of the inhabitants of the benighted land I had traversed, my visit had been the means of blessing, and as I looked back I could praise God not only for this, but for the fact that in answer to prayer He had supplied my temporal needs. This He had sometimes done by inclining those who had been blessed through the ministry of the Word committed unto me to give me freewill offerings, and at other times by leading His people in the homeland to send me gifts, but He always graciously supplied my needs in answer to prayer without my having to make them known to man or to ask for money. Thus I proved the truth of that promise, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

CHAPTER XVII

WHAT CAN BE DONE

THE question will naturally be asked, "How are we responsible, and what can we do?"

It will be seen from what has been said that the Armenian people are being exterminated, and their territory and property appropriated by the Moslems,—whilst their condition to-day is probably worse than it has ever been during the whole course of their history. It becomes, therefore, as much a Christian duty to endeavour to stop the killing of these people as to send missionaries to preach to them, and in order that this end may be intelligently worked and prayed for I give some particulars which relate to the political aspect of the case, and which also explain to some extent why it is that the Armenians look specially to England as the Power which should help them.

It was in order to support Turkey in rejecting the claim of Russia to what would have doubtless proved to have been the right to protect the Christian races of Turkey that England fought the Crimean war, and thus prevented Russia from asserting her claim.

In the year 1878, when her troops had entered Armenia, Russia only agreed to withdraw them on condition that the Sultan carried "into effect, without further delay, the improvements and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by Armenians, and to guarantee their security from Koords and Circassians." *

Treaty of San Stefano, Art. 16.

Although Russia had well earned the right of assuring herself that the Christians in Turkey were in future to be protected, and was the Power best able, by her position, to see that the promised reforms were carried out, England took objection and was the leading Power in transferring this obligation of Turkey a few months later from Russia to the European Powers in Art. 61 of the Berlin treaty. That clause is as follows :—

“The Sublime Porte undertakes to carry out without further delay the amelioration and reforms demanded by local requirements in the provinces inhabited by the Armenians, and to guarantee their security against the Circassians and the Kurds. It will periodically make known the steps taken to this effect to the Powers who will superintend their application.”

Not only was Russia in this way robbed of the fruit of her conquest, but England went farther, and whilst with the Powers at Berlin she was making the above-mentioned stipulation, also made another Treaty between herself and Turkey which gave her a special responsibility for the Christian races, quite apart from the European Powers, and which is known as the Cyprus Convention. Its 1st Article runs thus :—

“If Batum, Kars, Ardahan, or any of them shall be retained by Russia, and if any attempt shall be made at any further time by Russia to take possession of any territories of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan in Asia, as fixed by the definite treaty of peace, England engages to join His Imperial Majesty the Sultan in defending them by force of arms. In return His Imperial Majesty the Sultan promises to England to introduce necessary reforms to be agreed upon later between the two Powers, into the government and for the protection of the Christian and other subjects of the Porte in these territories (Armenia); and to enable England to make necessary provision for executing her engagements, His

Imperial Majesty the Sultan further consents to assign the Island of Cyprus to be occupied and administered by England."

It will be seen from the foregoing that the fact that Russia has not now the right to enter Asiatic Turkey or protect the Armenians is due to England, and also that the latter has made herself more responsible than any other Power to see that they are protected. Let us now look at the evil results these Treaties have had in Armenia.

It is, of course, impossible to say with certainty what the condition of things would have been had they not been made, but, whilst they may have been framed with the very best of intentions, the probability is that if they had never been concluded the condition of the Armenians would have been considerably better at the present day than it is; and it is difficult to imagine that it could have been worse.

Those who have resided in the country from before the time at which these Treaties were made affirm that prior to their conclusion the Armenians enjoyed a fair amount of freedom, and that the Turks, although oppressing, treated them with some degree of consideration, but that the negotiations entered into by the Powers resulted in an altered attitude on the part of the Turks, who, from that time, regarded the Armenians in a new way, and, because England had secured their protection, looked upon them as a possible menace to their Empire. The result was that in the years immediately following, the Christians were oppressed with much greater rigour,—a policy which has continued with ever-increasing severity down to the present day. This animosity against the stipulation made by Britain was well shown up at the time of the massacres, when, in certain instances, villages which were Protestant, and on that account considered to be looking to England for help, were treated

with even greater harshness than was meted out to those which worshipped under the shelter of a Gregorian Church. Assuming therefore that Turkey could have retained her territory in Armenia throughout the period that has elapsed since 1878, everything points to the conclusion that the Armenians would have been better off without it, and had she lost part of these domains it is, in the matter of material prosperity, very unlikely that the conditions in that part would have been worse.

Judging by the policy which the British Government has adopted during recent years in "ceasing to urge upon the Porte the introduction of general reforms" in fulfilment of Treaty obligations, it has apparently realised that the urging of these without at the same time compelling their fulfilment really does harm to the cause, which confirms the view that the Armenians would, considering the way it has been evaded, have been better without the stipulation.

The stipulation of the Cyprus Convention, if looked at only from the moral and religious standpoint, must be regarded as a national crime, for, by it, Britain, a nominally Christian country, by guaranteeing to protect Turkey from any appropriation of territory in Armenia by Russia, practically did her best to ensure that the Armenian nation, which was known as a Christian one long before our own accepted Christianity, should always for the future be ruled over by a Moslem Power, and that Power, one that was admittedly the worst and most intolerant in the universe.

It was a wrong towards our fellow-Christians in Armenia which, though we tried to save our consciences by making a stipulation for the introduction of reforms, has been an insurmountable difficulty ever since, a thorn in our side as well as a blot on the honour of the British nation. Not only have thousands of simple-minded

Christians in Armenia been dismayed when put to the sword by what has seemed to them the entire apathy of another Christian nation, which was indirectly and unintentionally the means of bringing that disaster upon them, but the Moslems themselves have held this nation up to derision on that account.

Even the Moslems expected us to punish them for the massacres, and to come to the rescue of those we had pledged ourselves to protect; our failure to do this not only brought about loss of prestige to us, but an unchecked annoyance and extermination of the Christians.

Nothing is to be gained by casting aspersions and abuse on the Turks, many of whom, in persecuting Christians, are only acting in accord with the dictates of their religion, and some of whom have excellent traits of character.

Speaking at a meeting held during the present year Canon MacColl said "he thought the Great Powers of Europe were more to blame than the Sultan himself. He acted conscientiously, obeying the laws of his religion, but the European Powers could not be regarded as acting conscientiously."*

If Turks have been trained in what we consider an unwholesome environment, it is their misfortune rather than their fault; the Turkish peasants, what few there are, have probably not many more faults than the Armenians, excepting that the underlying vein of savagery has shown itself more frequently.

It is in official Turkdom that one finds so often the intolerant, persecuting bigot, but that this description does not apply to all officials I think I have made clear by my description of some of those with whom I was brought into contact.

The Armenians were led to believe, after the framing of

* *Evening Standard*, Feb. 23rd, 1906.

the Berlin and Cyprus Treaties, that the only hope of securing assistance from the European Powers lay in stirring up oppression and slaughter on the part of the Turks, in the hope that by this means the sympathy of Europe might be secured. At the time of the massacres, however, no overt act of rebellion on their part had taken place, but they blame England for not having helped them, after giving them hopes which were ill-founded.

Whilst we cannot definitely say what were the motives which prompted the Sultan to instigate the massacres, there is some reason for believing that it was a defensive measure. He has spies everywhere in Turkey, and would soon hear that the Armenians considered, perhaps wrongly, that England was pledged to assist them in the event of their rising. With British coercion looming in front of him, and the possibility, if attacked by that nation, of having his rear position harassed by Armenians, what more natural to a semi-civilised Moslem monarch, than to first of all make sure of his rear by killing off the Armenians, cruel and heartless though that action was? Since then, realising what a menace to his Empire their link with Britain might become, he has allowed their extermination to proceed, though usually by quieter and more subtle methods, starvation and disease replacing such violence as might attract the attention of Europe.

The Sultan has not, of course, fulfilled the obligation which he undertook, and we have the right to censure him on this account. At the same time one cannot blame him for resenting the appropriation of his territory or interference with his rights in exchange for which he receives no compensating advantages.

I am not anxious to pose as a politician, but, in case any may say that nothing can be done, I wish positively to affirm that something can be done and ought to be

done. Several excellent plans for dealing with the situation have been advocated by other writers, and if I may venture an opinion I would suggest the following as the most feasible.

In the first place, the idea of establishing an independent Armenian kingdom must be regarded, both as dangerous, and, for various reasons, practically impossible. Armenia is almost depopulated of its original inhabitants, and the question is not so much one of re-establishing the nation, as of saving the remnant from extermination.

The two things to which a Turk responds most readily are bullying and backsheesh. The former, unaccompanied by the latter, is naturally not of much use, yet it is the only measure hitherto adopted in seeking to untie the Armenian tangle. It is an open secret, that the Sultan receives large presents from Koordish chiefs and others, in return for which, he allows them to carry on their depredations unchecked. Any legislation which makes for the welfare and security of the Christians must of necessity retard their liberty to do this, and thus impoverish their monarch. A scheme, therefore, having for its object the safeguarding of the Armenians, must, if it is to meet with the Sultan's approval, make some provision to re-imburse him for what he will lose in this way. Any peaceable measure which does not ensure this, is naturally doomed to failure.

In order to make this possible, without at the same time incurring liability ourselves, advantage must be taken of the fact that Asiatic Turkey possesses great mineral wealth. From the second chapter of the Book of Genesis right down to recent Blue Books, we are assured of the existence of this. Amongst other things which have already been discovered are gold, silver, copper, zinc, lead, antimony, manganese, borax, chrome, emery, asphalte, lime, gypsum, sulphur, mercury, petroleum, iron, and coal.

This cannot claim to be an exhaustive list; but few of

the mines are worked at all, practically none are efficiently worked. It is not even allowed that they should be: e.g., in Van vilayet there is an outcrop of coal on the hills, but the natives must not quarry it, and are therefore obliged to burn wood, which they bring long distances at great expense.

Therefore a large profit could be made solely from the working of this coal, and its sale in the neighbourhood; but this is only one of many instances, and there are doubtless many other minerals which might profitably be worked for export.

Consular reports establish the fact of Turkey's vast mineral wealth, and point to the conclusion that a systematic examination of the country would probably lead to the discovery of greater treasure. They also, however, seem to be unanimous in declaring that, in spite of untiring effort, concessions to work them cannot in most cases be obtained.*

Were the mines properly worked under safe conditions by either a British or an International Syndicate, the increase of revenue derived from an enlarged product should much more than compensate the Sultan for losses in other directions.

Quite apart however from any mining revenues, if he were to protect his Christian subjects and enable them to carry on their work as they would like to do, he would receive an increase of income from taxation many times greater than anything he secures from the presence of the Koords.

The plan adopted in the Lebanon has been measurably successful, and some approximation to that plan should be applied to Armenia, the Powers taking a general supervision, with the right of veto on the appointment of governors, and with a few *gendarmes* from both Moslems and Christians under the superintendence of certain foreign officials.

* *Vide Diplomatic Consular Reports, May, 1903.*

The principle of taxation also requires reform. If, instead of farming taxes, a financial commission were appointed under these foreign officers, with authority to determine what each particular village should pay during a fixed period, say five years, with dates of payment, the villagers themselves being left to bring in the taxes, and the Turkish Government having power to penalize for non-payment, it would be found that material conditions would improve, and that a re-assessment of the villages after this period could be made at a much higher value.

Briefly stated then, the reforms needed are as follows :

1. The introduction of a *gendarmerie* system, under foreign officials, greater power being given to the one who is at present nominally the Christian Vice-Governor.

2. A financial commission to supervise taxation, and having authority to exploit and lease the mines.

3. The present system of arming the Koords as Hamidieh should be abandoned, and these tribes kept in check.

There are probably many Turks who would welcome such changes as conducing to the progress of their country. Many of them, seeing the Christians dying for lack of food, must realize that their own prospects are extremely poor and that when the Armenians have been wiped out, there is some probability of Koords and Turks falling upon one another.

Great Britain has for centuries upheld the cause of justice and sought to succour the needy and oppressed. As a leading nation of the world and as one which has secured pledges from the Sultan which he has not fulfilled, it is her duty, not only towards the Turkish Christian races but also on behalf of her own good name to see that the stigma of this Armenian blot be removed from history. If Cyprus was ceded to her in order that she might prevent Russia from gaining the right to protect the Armenians, and if it be admitted that otherwise

Russia would have carried this end out successfully, then England cannot longer neglect to ensure the performance of those obligations which she undertook to see carried out when it was ceded to her, without having it said that she has purchased this island with the blood of Armenians.

What is the alternative should England demand these reforms and fail to succeed in having them enforced? In that case she should abrogate that clause of the Treaty which refers to the Armenians. She has the right to do this because Turkey has failed to fulfil her pledge.

On this subject Canon MacColl well says :—

“ In any case England should at once declare herself released from the Anglo-Turkish Convention, by which this country is engaged to resist any Russian aggression in Armenia by force of arms. It is not, I submit, consistent with the dignity and honour of England to be a party to a mischievous sham. The convention is mischievous because it makes this country morally responsible for the iniquities of Turkish misrule in Armenia, and because it encourages the Porte in its belief that so long as that convention lasts England is certain to repel Russian aggression. The convention is a sham because every sane person in England knows that no British Government, Tory or Liberal, would dare to move a single soldier or ship to defend Turkey in case of Russian aggression.

Britain has already abrogated this Treaty in principle by instructing her Ambassador to cease to urge upon the Porte the introduction of reforms, but, not having annulled it in actuality, she still ranks as the nation which has most right to interfere, and thus, Powers which might otherwise be inclined to deal single-handed with the question, naturally look to her to take the initiative.

It will be objected that this would leave Russia free to encroach on Turkish territory, but this question might be

settled by the conclusion of a counter-treaty with Russia giving England corresponding advantages, whilst at the same time securing for the Armenians rights which they do not now enjoy and which would make life considerably more tolerable for them. Nothing would be more likely to make the Sultan yield than the realization of the fact that Britain was on the point of cancelling her contract with him in order to make a counter-treaty with Russia.

Another objection will be, that the Armenians would not like the rule of Russia, because it might deny them the religious liberty they desire. It must be remembered, however, that the Russia of to-day is very different to the nation of that name as it was ten years ago, and in the new Russia which is looming on the horizon there is at least some possibility of greater religious freedom. But, in any case, England could probably secure this to the Christians of Turkey in the counter-treaty already referred to. Then there are Powers other than Russia with which, in the event of her cancelling the present Treaty with Turkey, England might make a counter-agreement regarding Armenia.

Perhaps it would be more advantageous to do so with Germany, who has been and is the chief hindrance in the way of the enforcement of reform by the other signatories of the Berlin Treaty. Her friendliness for the Sultan and the encouragement and support she has given him whilst he neglects to fulfil the Treaty signed in her own capital, is a policy which, though it may have resulted in a multiplication of German interests and missionaries in Armenia, has, by preventing the institution of reform, been a cruel and merciless one in its effect on the Christian races of Turkey, and by making a counter-treaty with us, Germany might put an end to this strange contradiction of principle, whereby, whilst with her left hand she does philanthropic work for the Armenians, with her right she gives power to their oppressor.

Even if unable to come to terms with Russia or another Power, the abrogation of this clause of the Treaty would be calculated to have a good effect for the following reasons :—

1. By giving to America and other Powers a free hand to interfere.

2. Assuming that the Sultan's motive in exterminating the Armenians is the fear that they may be a menace to his Empire, when he no longer sees the power of Britain behind them, he will not feel it so incumbent on him to oppress and kill them.

3. It would also place England in a more favourable light in the eyes of the Armenians, and take away the reproach which they feel they may naturally cast upon her.

As things now stand, if we do not insist on having this Treaty fulfilled by Turkey, either in the way suggested or in some other effective manner, we cannot, without pursuing a selfish and un-Christian policy, unworthy of the British nation, do other than cancel it.

As a British subject I wish to see this disgrace wiped off the national slate. In addition, I have had to suffer at least some inconvenience through the present Turkish régime. I went to Asiatic Turkey in order to conduct religious services, but in some places I was entirely prevented from doing so because the natives were too intimidated to come and listen; in others I did so only with great risk to those who heard me. In many towns I visited, Armenians, who went gladly to hear Americans preach, would not come to hear me on account of my nationality. Probably they had lost loved ones at the time of the great massacres, and therefore felt bitter against the English, whom they had learnt to blame for them. Aside from the Armenian question, a British subject ought to be allowed to follow his vocation, without let or hindrance, even in Turkey.

To those who, like myself, believe that the most high God "rules in the kingdom of men," and perhaps also to those who hold other views, it must be apparent by the results and by the continued thorn in the flesh that these Treaties have been to us, that they had in them elements which did not, because of their selfishness, meet with Divine approval. Since they were concluded, we have spent money on Consular and special deputations, on orphanages and philanthropic work—we have had the blame of the massacres thrown upon us, and we find to-day that the Armenians are in a worse condition than ever. There are some who believe, too, that the humiliation we suffered during the Boer War, when a nominally Christian nation was allowed to humble us and from the effects of which we are suffering to-day, and will suffer yet for many days, was a chastisement, permitted by God, to punish us for not having interfered to protect the Armenians at the time of the massacres, and that were this question settled, national prosperity might return; but be that as it may, every true man, whatever his belief, will desire to see the wrong righted, the burden lifted from the oppressed, and a reproach removed from his national records.

America should feel at least some responsibility in the matter. Judging by the amount of capital invested, her interests in Turkey are greater than those of all the other Powers combined, yet she has repeatedly been slapped in the face and has taken it patiently, and whilst it may be right to do this when only one's own face is involved, it is a different matter when the slaps affect the Armenians as well, the people for whose welfare so many of her missionaries labour. Colleges built with American money, have in the past been burnt, and within quite recent times an attempt made to destroy one by fire. Sheep belonging to her missionaries have been wantonly carried off and the lives of her subjects endangered.

Though France secured a recognition of her institutions in Turkey several years ago by means of the Mitylene incident, and the same was nominally granted to America at the time when her warships were at Beirout, the Porte has now, I believe, formally declined to recognize this right. It is to be hoped, therefore, that she will assert her claims and support a vigorous policy for reform. In the meantime, having regard to the fact that her interests are so great, it would be well if she could somewhat augment her present staff of Consuls in Asiatic Turkey. They are less in number than the British.

It will be objected by some. Have we not Consuls in Asiatic Turkey? Undoubtedly, and their influence has often been very beneficial in restraining Moslem rapacity and massacre. I consider, however, that their scope has been narrowed in two ways during recent years, first by the loss of respect, which resulted from our not interfering at the time of the massacres; secondly, by the instruction given to our Ambassador "not to press upon the Porte the introduction of necessary reforms, etc."

Then, just because they are officials of the British Government, it is often extremely difficult for Consuls to get into close and intimate touch with things as they are. For the sake of prestige, they are obliged to employ a number of Moslem servants, and, when they travel, are usually accompanied by several zabtiehs. It is no difficult task, therefore, for the Turk to keep them under his surveillance, and to so "arrange" things for them, as to prevent their seeing anything that might be considered objectionable, and, although they undoubtedly come into touch with the Armenians, they are almost compelled by force of circumstances to rotate, to a great degree, within a Moslem circle. In any case, they have no real power to act; all they can do is to report, and, in my humble opinion, our Consular system itself, though

excellent for some lands, is not arranged on the most effective basis for dealing with the problems of such a country as Turkey, which really requires a system specially adapted to its need.

Whilst there are undoubtedly instances in which Consuls have interfered and secured justice for Christians, the average Armenian would not dare to go near a British Consul with a complaint, because of the punishment which might be meted out to him for such a course. I heard of a Christian peasant, who went out of a village to show one of our Consuls the road to take, who, on his return, was promptly cast into prison on suspicion of having made complaint. When a Consul visits a village, Christians rather try and hide any grievances and appear as though they had none, lest he should interfere and thus bring trouble upon them.

On this subject a resident in Turkey writes: "I could stand seeing ordinary suffering and poverty, but to have added to it the awful galling oppression and abuse of the Turks, with no hope of relief, sickens one. England tries to put down slavery in Africa, but in this land, for which she is in a special sense answerable, she lets slavery, murder, and every sort of oppression be carried on against the nominally Christian population and kills them off with her Consular investigations."

Another question often asked is: "Did we not institute certain reforms after the massacres?" We did not. There was a scheme of reform promulgated by the Sultan before the great massacres, which really helped on that time of carnage, but these reforms were never carried out.*

The other objection I have met with, which, though a very common one, is the merest quibble, refers to the Armenian character. The attacks made upon it

* For further particulars see *Encycl. Brit.*, 10th Ed., Vol. xxv., 636 ff.

during recent years, whilst extremely unjust, are nevertheless made the most common excuse for not assisting them. Even supposing they were as bad as described by some of those who attack them, that does not in itself constitute even a shadow of a reason for not helping them. On the contrary, as their bad character, if such be admitted, is very largely the outcome of their environment, it makes more imperative upon us our duty to so ensure to them adequate protection of life and property, to so abolish the necessity which often arises for lying in order to escape injustice, and to so demonstrate to them that their fellow Christians have hearts which beat with concern and sympathy for their welfare, as to make it possible for them to live pure, true, healthy lives, and, above everything else, to secure to them, that unspeakable blessing of religious liberty whereby they shall be able to worship, none daring to make them afraid.

As, however, I do not admit the truth of what has been said against their character, I feel it is necessary to go somewhat fully into this subject and, after giving my own impressions, to state the opinions of others. The majority of those who have visited the Armenians in their mountain homes, are, I think, agreed in speaking very highly of them, whilst I have usually found that those who most readily cast aspersions upon them are those who have not seen them under these conditions, and who have based their judgment upon specimens met, either in Britain, on the Continent, or in Turkish seaport towns, in all of which places they are under European influence. The inference to be drawn from this is that, generally speaking, Western life tends to demoralise them, the reason probably being that, having grown up amidst simple surroundings and being unaccustomed to resisting the temptations of civilised life, they are, when suddenly confronted with them, unable from lack of experience to so successfully combat them,

as can those who, born into this environment, have been accustomed from infancy to meeting them. I do not, of course, mean to say that all Armenians are unable to live good lives when outside their own country. If they are truly Christians and have the power of Christ, there is no reason why they should not, and many individual ones, although under European influence, live up to a high standard of perfection.

Seen in their mountain homes, or in the interior towns of Turkey, the character exhibited by the Armenians, whilst not devoid of faults, is, on the whole, highly commendable, the amount of mental activity possessed by some of them comparing very favourably with that of the peoples of the West. Many of their failings are directly attributable to the environment in which they are compelled to live, and if—whilst there is not so much open vice with them as amongst the nations of Europe, or in America—their moral sense is not so high, it is because it has been forcibly pulled down by the presence of the Koord and the Turk. Were it not for the terrible demoralisation to which they are compelled to submit, the Armenians might rank as high, if not higher, in the scale of morality than do many Christian nations of the West.

Dignified and courteous, thrifty, sober, and industrious, with an intense desire for education as being the most valuable acquirement in a land where they may be at any time robbed of the implements of any more material method of earning a livelihood, they are thoughtful and capable, and combine with business astuteness a liberality and hospitality of spirit which I have never seen surpassed elsewhere. The women have a subtle modesty of manner and sweetness of demeanour which, for want of a more suitable word, is best described as “womanliness.” Children are taught to be intensely respectful, not only to their parents but to all adults.

In order to prove that the Armenian character has

often been unjustly maligned, I now give the opinions of other travellers who have seen them in the land which is their home.

Mr. E. A. Brayley Hodgetts says :—

“ Some of the enemies of the Armenians have described them to the European public as a lazy, scoundrelly set of rogues and thieves, who live by swindling the honest Mahomedan. That this is a gross and infamous libel I hope I have abundantly proved. Of course there are Armenian usurers, money-lenders, and blood-suckers, but I am given to understand that such persons may be found even in London and of the English race. Yet we would all of us be justly indignant if we were told that we were a nation of swindlers. The Armenian peasants are the wealth-producers of Turkey—this cannot be too strongly insisted on; and to give them their liberty could not have other than beneficial results for the entire civilised world.” *

Rev. Henry Fanshawe Tozer, M.A., remarks :—

“ Though the majority of the Armenians in Asiatic Turkey—especially the agricultural population—have been too much ground down by centuries of oppression to show many signs of spirit or energy, yet there can be no doubt that their national character is a powerful one, and will exercise a marked influence in determining the future of the East. The race is characterised in its political and social life by industry, perseverance, and long-suffering endurance.” †

Dr. G. C. Reynolds, for thirty-six years a missionary in Asiatic Turkey, was recently asked by a Press representative :—

“ What are the mental and moral qualities of the Armenians in Asiatic Turkey ? ” to which he replied :—

“ I am glad you have asked that question. I find in England unaccountable and unjustifiable prejudice against

* “ Round about Armenia.” † “ Turkish Armenia.”

the Armenians as such. As a matter of fact they ought to be called the Europeans of the Orient, and Europe owes them a debt of gratitude for having borne the first brunt of the repeated invasion of the savage hordes from further East. They possess fine mental powers, and have produced many worthy names in literature and art, in politics and in war. To mention only a few, Nubar Pasha, the former Prime Minister of Egypt, Chosohoff, and Melikoff. Of course the Armenian has many faults. He is sharp in his dealings, not over scrupulous in business, and his ethical standard is not too high, but many of his faults can be attributed to his environment.”*

Mr. H. F. B. Lynch, the well-known traveller, and authority on Armenia, says :

“The Armenians, being a commercial and industrial as well as an agricultural people, have spread themselves outside the natural limits of their country, attracted to the growing centres of industry upon its confines. They contribute a valuable and increasing element to the urban populations.

“They are possessed of virtues with which they are seldom credited. The fact that in Turkey they are rigorously precluded from bearing arms has disposed superficial observers to regard them as cowards. A different judgment might be meted out were they placed on an equality in this respect with their enemies, the Koords. At all events, when given the chance, they have not been slow to display martial qualities both in the domain of the highest strategy and in that of personal prowess. The victorious commander-in-chief for Russia in her Asiatic campaign of 1877 was an Armenian from the district of Lori—Loris Melikoff. In the same campaign the most brilliant general of division in the Russian army was an Armenian—Tergukasoff. The gallant young staff-officer, Tarnaieff, who planned and led the hair-

* *The Daily News.*

brained attack on the Azizi fort in front of Erzerum, was an Armenian, and paid for his daring with his life. At the present day the Russian frontier police, engaged in controlling the Koords of the border, are recruited from among Armenians. These examples may be sufficient to nail to the counter an inveterate lie, from which the Armenians have suffered, at least in the British estimation, more, perhaps, than from any other supposed defect.

"If I were asked what characteristics distinguish the Armenians from the Orientals, I should be disposed to lay most stress on a quality known in popular speech as *grit*. It is this quality to which they owe their preservation as a people, and they are not surpassed in this respect by any European nation."*

Other testimonies might be added, but let these suffice. It would be as wrong to believe all that is said against Armenian character as it is to believe all that is written against this nation, or in favour of its oppressors, in certain newspapers; some of which, I have reason for believing, are at times bought over to a pro-Turkish policy, though this has probably happened more frequently with Continental journals, the majority of English ones being above such transactions.

In spite, however, of all that has been said and written, Turkish horrors still continue. "Stop, you wretches, you are killing me!" "I have nothing to confess!" These and similar cries go up to-day from Turkish prisons as poor Christians are tortured, whilst the smell of roasting flesh fills the dungeons with a sickly odour as hot irons are applied in order to extort some confession from the victims, whose piercing shrieks never reach the outside world.

"Only kill me, that is all I ask!" is a still more pitiful request, which is heard, not only in prisons, but when a Christian woman is forced to submit to dishonour at the hand of Koord or Turk.

* "Armenia."

These cries of agony ever ascend from the Christians in Turkey, and though the sky must be black with them, the query still is: How long, oh Lord, how long?

My heart is saddened, as I think of all the Armenian women who, to this day, are kept as captives within Moslem harems in Turkey, many of whom were taken at the time of the massacres.

Christians they were, but now no more they hear
The precious prayers and hymns: yea, trembling, fear
To hand their heritage of heart-ache down,
To offspring who their mother's faith disown;
Silent they nurse it, blending with their tears,
Remorseful mem'ries of departed years.

One wonders if such women, shut off from all communication with other Christians, and precluded from teaching their faith to their own children, are still able to be true to the Saviour they have been trained to love.

And, since, for all this agony, for all these cries of tortured Christians, for these dishonoured women, these ruined homes, and sad disheartened lives, England is in part responsible, it is but right that Englishmen should seek to lift this burden from the oppressed. May God grant that in answer to the prayers of this nation, and of Christians everywhere, blended as they will be with the petitions of the Armenians themselves, deliverance may come to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

Above all there is a God who cares—a God who says to nations as to individuals: "If thou forbear to deliver them that are drawn unto death, and those that are ready to be slain; if thou sayest, Behold we knew it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it? and shall not He render to every man according to his works? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

The British nation has to choose between seeking to uplift the burden from these people, or of having laid at her door through future years a perpetual never-dying crime, and the choice of the nation rests largely with the individual. If each who loves his country's honour, prays, works, and speaks; something undoubtedly will be done, and a solemn responsibility rests on all to do this, for

“ We are not here to play, to dream, to drift :
We have hard work to do, and loads to lift—

“ Say not, the days are evil—who's to blame ?
And fold the hands and acquiesce, oh shame !
Stand up ! speak out ! and bravely in God's name,
Be strong.”

